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THIS MONTH'S GOAL

BALANCE

This elusive state of equilibrium can't be achieved instantly—but you can create conditions to help it along. Here's how to re-center yourself.

1 BODY

RECALIBRATE

- **TRY TULSI** Research suggests that this herb, called holy basil and used in Ayurvedic medicine, may lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol and help you stabilize mood swings.
- **EXERCISE YOUR OPPOSITE** Do you sleepwalk through your fitness routine? Create some variety: Instead of going for your usual run, take a dance class. Rather than soothing yoga, try kickboxing.
- **REAPPORTION YOUR PLATE** Is it carb-heavy or meat-dense? Balance your diet by adjusting your ratios: Try a half plate of greens, a quarter grains, and a quarter lean protein.
- **STRENGTHEN YOUR CORE** Your abs are critical to creating and maintaining balance in the body. See "Find Your Center," p. 54.

2 MIND

RESTORE

- **BREATHE IN ONE NOSTRIL, OUT THE OTHER** The simple yoga breathing technique called Nadi Shodhana, which means "alternate-nostril breathing," is said to clear the head and calm the mind. Gently closing off your right nostril with your right thumb, inhale slowly through the left one. Then close the left nostril with your right ring and little fingers and exhale out the right. Now inhale through the right, exhale left; repeat five times on each side.
- **DELEGATE** Think of a task that you could shift to someone else (taxes? housecleaning? a tedious, time-sucking office chore that a junior coworker might relish?), and simply let it go.

3 SOUL

RELIEVE+REVIVE

- **BRING BALANCE** to your garden's greatest treasure—its soil—by starting a compost heap: Your kitchen scraps can become nature's best fertilizer. Visit howtocompost.org for a collection of articles and guides for getting started.
- **SUPPORT "A BETTER BALANCE"** (abetterbalance.org), a nonprofit legal organization dedicated to helping working American families get the time and on-the-job flexibility they need to care for their families.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

WHAT'S *YOUR* GOAL?

To exercise more? Worry less? Join the community at wholeliving.com and get support from other readers who, like you, are desperately seeking balance. You'll find expert strategies, plus ideas for remaining motivated while you achieve your aim.

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We live in denim, and our stories are interwoven with the threads of our favorite pairs. But can a better cut transform our sense of self? Four women show off looks that give them a new shape, and fondly remember jeans from their past.

BY SARAH ENGLER

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photographs clockwise from left: Manuel Rodriguez; Raymond Hom (3)

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BODY LANGUAGE

WHEN PEOPLE (yoga teachers, enlightened doctors, Mom) used to say, "Listen to your body," I'd think, *okaaaay* ... not really knowing what they meant. In my youth, my body did what it was told and didn't talk back; it could jump, cartwheel, and rebound from a bad fall off a bike or a ski slope with barely a whimper. But in its fourth decade—after it has birthed three kids (one via C-section), endured six marathons, been withered by dysentery (bad street food, India), healed two broken bones, been pummeled on the rocks by waves, punished by a lousy diet (too much takeout), and truncated by 20 years of toting overstuffed bags to work—my body has definitely found its voice! In fact, it won't stop talking.

It's saying, as all our bodies do, that it needs respect, love, nourishment—*stat*. Which is why we focused this month's issue on the body and all the ways that we can mindfully care for it. For starters, we can inspire it by taking it to new heights ("Climb Every Mountain," p. 84); make it powerful at its core ("Find Your Center," p. 54); feed it smarter foods ("Healthy Salads," p. 96) while working with—rather than against—its natural hormonal rhythms ("Balanced Weight Loss," p. 104); polish its ragged exterior so it glows ("In the Buff," p. 90); and awaken it to its carnal desires ("Lost Your Appetite for Sex?" p. 78).

Yet the body, that old presumptive ally, can also betray us even when we treat it right. In "Touch of Grace" (p. 72), Lynn Darling writes movingly of the painful indignities of her recent breast cancer treatments, and how a modest woman in a bun—a Reiki practitioner in her Vermont town—helped her regain some of her energy and self-worth with a simple touch of the hands. What will *you* try this month?

Alexandra Postman, Editor-in-Chief

contributors

MINDY PENNYBACKER solves your home-greening questions in the new Econundrums column (p. 26). Founder of the Green Guide and now GreenerPenny .com, she's also the author of *Do One Green Thing*, out last month.

LYNN DARLING, an alterna-health neophyte, shares how a Reiki treatment helped make her cancer treatments more bearable in "Touch of Grace," p. 72. She has contributed to *The New York Times* and *Harper's Bazaar*, and lives in Vermont with her white lab, Henry.

MARIA ROBLEDO shot the graceful images for "Balanced Weight Loss" on p. 104. One of the first photographers hired when *Martha Stewart Living* was launched, she now counts Vera Wang and Ralph Lauren among her clients.

ELLEN BARRETT, a trainer and veteran magazine contributor who created the workout in "Find Your Center," p. 54, says the No. 1 rule when it comes to the core is to synchronize breathing with movement—but never hold your breath.

Alex Postman portrait by John Dolan, hair and makeup by Sara Johnson, wardrobe by Sabine Feuilloley; Simone cardigan and hexagonal cuff by Tory Burch, mid-rise 11-inch leg opening jeans by J Brand, see product guide for where to buy. Maria Robledo portrait by Sofia Rower.

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WHAT'S ON THE WEB

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PERSONALIZED SOLUTIONS

Find out what kind of worrier you are, or where you need balance in your life. Take our quizzes to determine your personal-stress profile, and get customized coping strategies.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Chat on discussion boards, correspond with experts and editors, and read our weekly stress-relief blog.

Find all this and more at wholeliving.com/stress-less.

+ SHARE YOUR BIKING STRATEGIES

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MOVE

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Want to pound the pavement but don't know how to begin? Find running tips, stretches, and shoe-buying advice at **wholeliving.com/running**

GIVE

ENVIRONMENTAL BLING

Surprise Mom with an earth-friendly accessory this year. Find out about sustainable jewels at **wholeliving.com/eco-jewels**

SCULPT

GO SLEEVELESS

Unpack those tank tops! Everything you need for summer-ready shoulders, triceps, and more is at **wholeliving.com/toned-arms**

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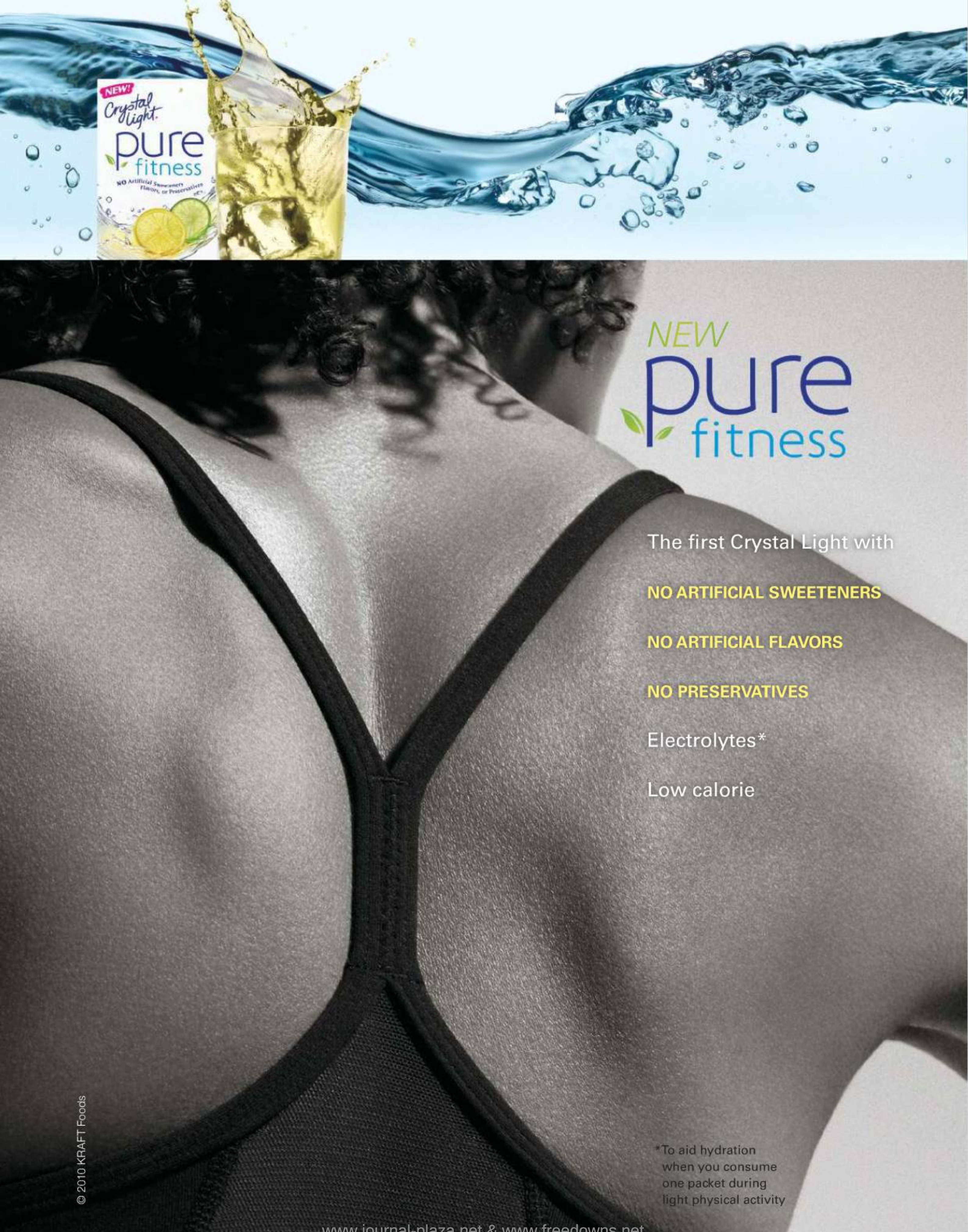

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READER TO READER

What keeps your spirits up?

This month's winner

I am shockingly self-absorbed. I can float through days (weeks? months?) not seeing any further than my own life. The only thing that helps me keep perspective on my problems is to be generous—with a donation, time, or even graciousness in a crowded supermarket. These acts never fail to pull me out of myself. Each morning I write down the previous day's act of generosity in my journal. If there are too many empty days, I know I have had too much "me" time and need to give back. **RHONDA R.**, *Forest Grove, OR*

TWEETED

"Reading @bodyandsoulmag & saw an article about how we should journal the good things in our day instead of always the bad! May try that one." —**YOGAGRL**

It's five o'clock somewhere

When I feel like my energy needs a boost, I turn on some music. A lot of people think that dancing is like sex—you need to be in the mood first. Wrong. You quickly find you're in the mood once you get started. Five o'clock used to be a real drag in my house, but now I call it Happy Hour. I crank up the music, and my kids and I dance while we fold laundry and pick up toys.

MARY K., *Norman, OK*

Kindness counts

I compliment or say something nice to someone in a thoughtful way that shows I've paid attention to them. The (surprised) smile that brightens their faces immediately brings a smile to mine.

KATHLEEN P., *Norristown, PA*

The giggle cure

To keep perspective in my hectic day-to-day life, all I have to do is listen to my 1-year-old laugh that deep belly laugh that you only hear from a baby. It would melt even the hardest of hearts.

ALICIA R., *Woodland Park, CO*

Give it away now

I keep a box in my garage and make it a personal goal to put one good item that I no longer need into it every week. This one thing (or more than one, when my kids contribute) has to be something that could be of use to someone less fortunate, such as a sweater, a toy, or maybe even a book or a movie. This helps me teach my children to give back to those in need, and it also makes it easier to keep my home clean and organized—which in turn gives us more time to do things we love to do.

KELLY M., *Santa Maria, CA*

Time-out

When I begin to feel overwhelmed, I take a breath, stop everything I'm doing, and first ask myself if this will matter an hour from now. Then I take another breath to clear the air. Just those few moments change my outlook!

RHODA G., *online*

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"I read your magazine when I was visiting the States and totally loved it! Can I buy it in the UK?"

GEMMA D., *London*

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TWEETED

"These potato-and-chicken hash cakes from a BodyandSoulmag recipe are scrumptious! You can use leftover chicken." —TRISHCASTRO

WHOLELIVING.COM

WHAT'S THE HARDEST PART ABOUT EATING HEALTHY?

Whole Living blogger Michelle Nardin wanted to know.

GIVING UP CHEESE AND SAUSAGE has been rough. I've given up alcohol, coffee, sugar, and smoking, and these foods were my last guilty pleasures as I work toward an anti-inflammatory diet. Also, the more I realize I can't have something, the more I want it! It becomes all I think about.

KAREN H., *Everett, WA*

BEING ON THE ROAD makes things difficult, and I travel once or twice a month. I can accidentally eat an extra 300 calories of "healthy" snacks when I'm craving something sweet or crunchy.

JUDY, *Arlington, VA*

THE COST OF ORGANIC FOOD is way too high. I found some organic chicken the other night and had to put it back and walk away. Too much for me. I have to find ways to get creative. I just wish prices were lower to make it easier on everyone who wants to be healthy.

MARIA S., *Hammond, IN*

I HAD NO ENERGY to eat the healthy way I used to. So I went to the doctor. Turns out I had a low-grade infection that was sapping my strength. Also, junk food is my comfort food!

MANDY H., *Jenison, MI*

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MAILBOX

Spreading good news

I'm 36, and I have rheumatoid arthritis. Since I started reading *B+S*, I live better and feel better. And soon, I'll be using it to inspire women in my Arthritis Foundation Women's Auxiliary Group. (I'm the Wellness Chair!) One request: The font colors are gorgeous but difficult to read. Please use darker colors!

MARIA O., *Dallas, TX*

Higher purpose

The story "This Way Up" [March] inspired me. Over the years, I've resolved (like a million others) to lose weight. And I've been eating better and exercising. But at 72, the weight isn't budging. This year, I made a new resolution: to find a gallery to show my paintings that I've been working on for 30 years. Mission accomplished! As for being 20 pounds overweight? Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.

PAT L., *Eddyville, OR*

Design notes

In the March issue there was lots of small black type, which made the magazine seem less playful. I'm no journalist or design expert, but I say keep the light, colorful, and inspired design, but lose all those tiny bits of information.

CARINE C., *online*

Mean greens

I greatly appreciate your article "Practice Safe Salad" [March]. Consumers deserve to know why these foodborne illnesses are happening, which you didn't mention. These bacteria don't naturally occur in plants but are found in animals, and make their way to the food supply through animal feces. If we reduce or eliminate our consumption of animal products, these outbreaks will be greatly reduced.

KATHY J., *online*

TWEETED

"'Googler, Heal Thyself'" in March's *Body+Soul*? 'Twas written for me. So glad to know I'm not alone in hypochondrial bliss."

—ELIZABETHLYONS

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MAKES 1

- 1 packet Truvia™ natural sweetener
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- 2½ teaspoons orange liqueur, such as Triple Sec
- ½ cup fresh orange juice (from 2 oranges)
- 1 2-inch piece of orange rind

Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add Truvia™ natural sweetener, vodka, liqueur, and juice; shake. Hold a lit match over an empty glass and squeeze the rind, bright side down, over the match. (Note: For your safety, be sure to burn the rind away from the alcohol.) The oil from the rind will ignite and fall into the glass. Fill glass with ice. Strain cocktail into glass, wrap the orange rind around a skewer or toothpick, and insert into glass as a garnish.

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whole living

photograph by Johnny Miller, prop styling by Julie Ho

A LIGHTER FOOTPRINT

Did you know the average shoe can take 1,000 years to decompose in a landfill? Flippees ($30; simpleshoes.com) have eco-certified nubuck straps and soles containing an organic compound that lets them biodegrade in 20 years. We call that a pretty big step forward.

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DAY TRIPS

CASTAWAY, SO CLOSE

You don't have to get shipwrecked to find paradise: These three undeveloped islands are a ferry ride from civilization. —LOLLY MERRELL

- > **Grape Island, MA** Roam among the mussels and the gulls and explore paths framed with wild berries on this 50-acre Boston Harbor island.
- > **Stockton Island, WI** The 10,000-acre wildlife haven in Lake Superior offers bears, loons, pine forests, and white-sand beaches.
- > **Anacapa Island, CA** On this volcanic triple islet in Southern California, see sea lions, flower-covered meadows, and vistas of the crashing Pacific surf.

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V

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ROAD TEST

E-READ ALL ABOUT IT

We know these can't stream video, take photos, or babysit your kids. But if you just want to *read*, a basic e-reader may be easier on your eyes than a tablet computer with a backlit screen. Here are a few options for a paperless library. —SARAH ENGLER

READER TOUCH EDITION BY SONY

PROS Access to more than 1 million books through the Reader Store (which includes libraries) and Google Books; turn pages on the six-inch touch screen with just a finger swipe.
CONS No wireless—you have to hook it up to your computer to load titles. *$299; sonystyle.com*

KINDLE DX BY AMAZON

PROS Books download from Amazon in seconds with included global 3G wireless; rotating text can go horizontal or vertical; display uses 16 shades of gray.
CONS Navigation buttons are more awkward than touch screen; 9.7-inch screen makes it less portable. *$489; amazon.com*

DR800 SG BY IREX

PROS An 8.1-inch touch screen has rotating text and comes with a stylus; titles available from Barnes & Noble store with included global 3G wireless; fastest page turns.
CONS No zoom or note-taking capabilities that most other readers have; on/off switch and stand-by mode can be confusing. *$400; bestbuy.com*

NOOK BY BARNES AND NOBLE

PROS Six-inch E Ink screen for reading, plus a 3.5-inch color LCD touch screen that lets you either flip through book covers or type in the name on a virtual keypad; 3G wireless included; lend your titles to friends for two weeks at a time.
CONS Slower than the others; touch screen requires a much harder tap. *$259; nook.com*

B+S ONLINE Need suggestions for a good read? Go to **wholeliving.com/book-reviews**

photographs from left by Edwin Beckenbach; Johnny Miller, prop styling by Julie Ho

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PANTRY DOCTOR

PULL OFF A PILAF

Turn one box of grains into two different (equally nutritious) meals.

WARM PILAF WITH CINNAMON, DRIED FRUIT, AND ALMONDS

▸ START WITH
4 c. COOKED AND COOLED
KASHI 7 WHOLE GRAIN PILAF (OR SIMILAR)

1½ c. SKIM MILK

+

¼ tsp. CINNAMON

½ c. TOASTED SLICED ALMONDS

+

½ tsp. VANILLA EXTRACT

¾ c. CHOPPED DRIED FRUIT, SUCH AS CHERRIES AND APRICOTS

+

2 Tbsp. HONEY (PLUS MORE FOR DRIZZLING, IF DESIRED)

1. Bring milk, cinnamon, vanilla, honey, and a pinch of kosher salt to a boil over medium-high heat. **2.** Add the Kashi and ½ c. of dried fruit. Cook 3 to 5 minutes, stirring constantly, until ⅔ of the milk is absorbed. **3.** Top with remaining fruit, almonds, and honey.

PILAF TABBOULEH

▸ START WITH
2¼ c. COOKED AND COOLED
KASHI 7 WHOLE GRAIN PILAF (OR SIMILAR)

3 SCALLIONS, THINLY SLICED

+

¾ c. DICED CUCUMBER

¾ c. CHOPPED FLAT-LEAF PARSLEY

+

2 to 3 Tbsp. LEMON JUICE

1 c. DICED TOMATO

+

1 Tbsp. EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

1. Combine all ingredients. 2. Season with kosher salt and freshly ground pepper. 3. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

WHOLE GIVING

LOAD UP

The sale of one Feed Haiti tote by Feed Projects (cofounded by model and designer Lauren Bush) provides 50 school meals for Haitian children. $35; *feedprojects.org*

DECODER

GRASS-FED VS. FREE-RANGE

GRASS-FED

In order for a label to claim "grass-fed," the USDA requires that the animal must have eaten only grass, and forage (and its mother's milk), and have had continuous access to pasture during the growing season. There are stricter standards for a label from the American Grassfed Association, which means the animal was also raised humanely and without hormones or antibiotics.

FREE-RANGE

Free-range claims are regulated by the USDA strictly for poultry (not eggs). Producers have to prove only that animals had "outside" access; there are no rules about the amount of time spent outdoors.

photographs by Raymond Horn, prop styling by Julie Ho, food styling by Sarah Carey, recipes by Kris Kurek

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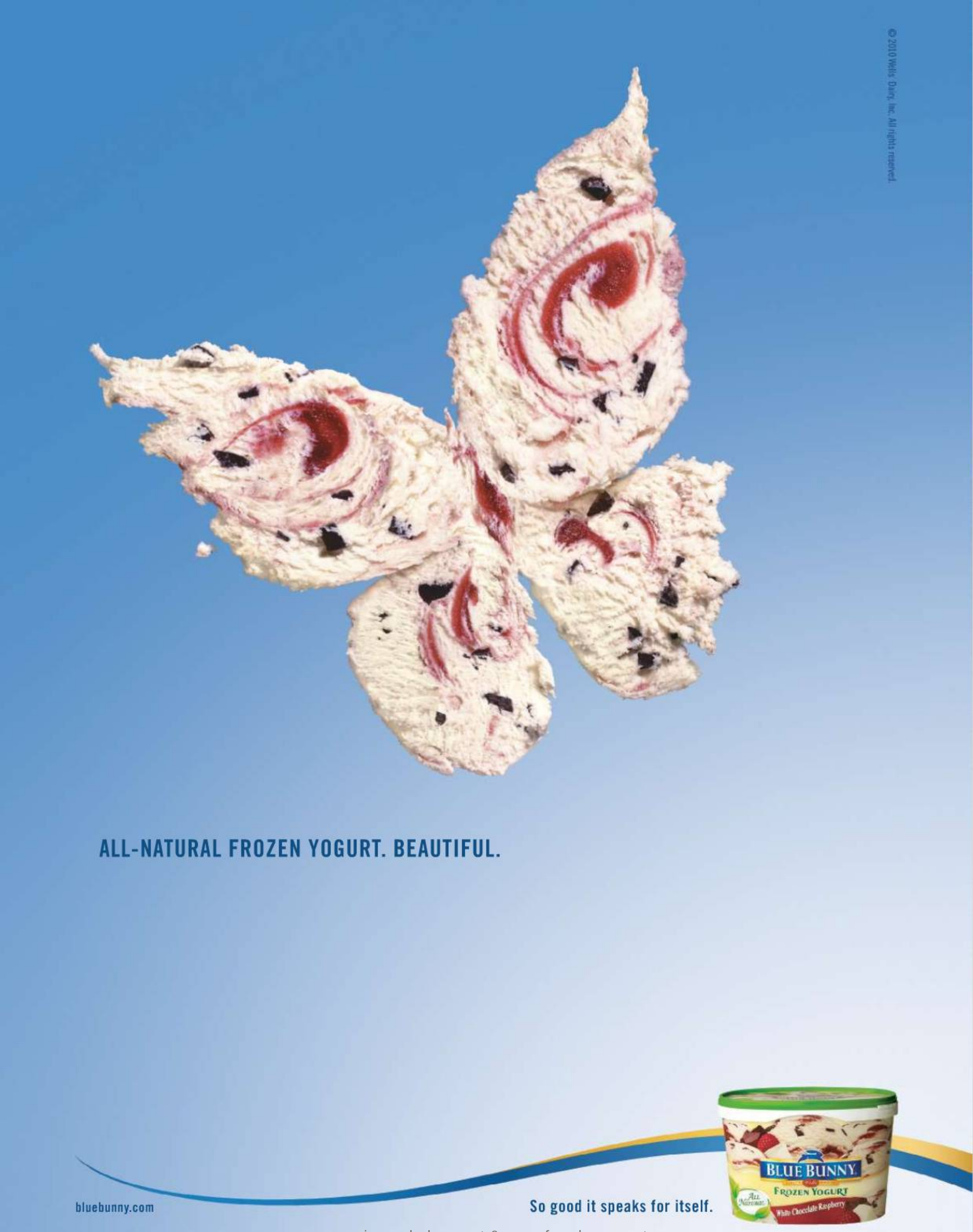

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ECONUNDRUMS

ASK MINDY

Mindy Pennybacker, author of *Do One Green Thing* and editor of the site Greenerpenny.com, solves our environmental dilemmas.

Q I've heard that throwing away some glass is actually good because it helps break down other trash in the landfill. Is that true?

—ANN DOHM, JEFFERSON CITY, MO

A Honestly, the tons of trash in landfills are usually so tightly packed that there's no oxygen available to enable decomposition. Glass is inert, which means it doesn't react with other substances, so it's one of the rare materials that can be recycled over and over without any loss of quality. Dumping it in the landfill would be an unconscionable waste of the energy and natural resources used to produce it, says Susan Collins, executive director of the Container Recycling Institute.

Q What's the most eco-friendly way to get rid of a mattress?

—SUSAN KAMINSKI, CHAPEL HILL, NC

A You could try donating it to a local charity, but often health departments won't allow it. Try giving it away on Craigslist.org or Freecycle.org. Or search Earth911.org to see if there's a center near you that can recycle the steel and the fiber inside the mattress.

B+S ONLINE For the answers to more questions, or to submit one of your own, go to **wholeliving.com/ask-mindy**

GREEN CRAFT

DIY WATERCOLORS

This Mother's Day help your kids surprise Grandma with a handmade, painted card. All it takes is a few pantry items and an empty egg carton. —S.E.

WHAT YOU NEED *baking soda, cornstarch, white vinegar, light corn syrup, food coloring (we like the plant-based kind from Chocolatecraftkits.com), and a plastic egg carton*

HOW TO MAKE IT In a bowl, mix 3 Tbsp. each baking soda, cornstarch, and white vinegar and 1½ tsp. corn syrup. The vinegar and baking soda combination will fizz. Once it's settled and fully mixed, pour into the egg carton so the cups are about one-third full. Stir in drops of food coloring until you've reached your desired shade. Leave at room temperature on a flat surface until hardened (a few hours), then use with a wet brush.

UPCYCLED FIND

PILLOW TALK

These dryer sachets by zJayne, made from discarded T-shirts filled with lavender buds, replace chemical-laden sheets. *$13 for one patched and two plain; etsy.com/shop/zjayne*

WHOLE GIVING

FOR MOMS EVERYWHERE

Make it a happier Mother's Day for families beyond your own. Supporting **One By One** (fightfistula.org) helps treat and prevent fistula, a childbirth-related injury that causes women in Third World countries to be incontinent and ostracized. Massachusetts-based **Small Can Be Big** (smallcanbebig.org) works with partners to pay the urgent bills of individual families facing homelessness. And **Global Giving** (globalgiving.org) raises funds for groups with programs that empower women worldwide, which can include workplace training for single mothers in Guatemala or life-skills classes for teenage moms in Kenya. —ANDRIANA VERDI

photographs clockwise from top left: courtesy of Mindy Pennybaker; Johnny Miller, prop styling by Julie Ho; Raymond Horn, prop styling by Julie Ho; courtesy of One By One

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photograph by Manuel Rodriguez, hair and makeup by Sophie Kaspar for Ford

VITAL STATISTICS

Age 44

Hometown New York City

Day job Founder and head of "green" building supply company and retail store Green Depot

Role models My mother, mother-in-law (yes, I am lucky), and (late) grandmother Gigi—all strong, authentic, generous, elegant women

Inspirations My kids' enthusiasm for the moment right now; the passion and heart of New York City

The House That Sarah Built

How a mold scare led this former TV executive to give the home-improvement industry an eco-friendly renovation.

BY RIMA SUQI

ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE Sarah Beatty's first baby was due, she asked a flooring specialist why the new kitchen floor in her Manhattan apartment was buckling. He suspected a mold infestation, and because certain kinds are linked to respiratory problems, he thought she might have to move out to protect her unborn child. "That was a wake-up call," she says. "I'd always paid attention to my diet and worked out. But I never considered the health of my home." Fortunately the situation wasn't as dire as predicted. It was dealt with quickly, but not forgotten.

With motherhood impending, Beatty—an admitted "type A personality"—had decided to leave her job as a TV executive. (She's now the mother of almost three: Elizabeth, 5; Jacob, 3; and one due this July.) After the mold scare, she began researching other home environmental issues. Though her husband, Mark, owned the building-supply firm MarJam, she realized she knew very little about the materials that made up her living space. She sealed a few walls she learned were likely off-gassing volatile organic compounds (VOCs), but she couldn't get straight answers from people in the building industry when she asked about the eco-friendliness (or unfriendliness) of other materials.

"To them, I was just some chick calling from her kitchen," she remembers. "But if I'm actually trying to understand, and no one can explain it to me, why would any other consumer feel compelled to go green? It really shouldn't be complicated."

That's when Beatty approached her husband with an idea for how she personally could make

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green building products more readily available. "I was a total outsider," she says. "Mark had to give me cultural explanations for things—it was like being in a foreign country."

Green Depot began in 2005 as a showroom for builders, tacked on to MarJam's Brooklyn distribution center. There are now 10 Green Depot stores. (The newest opened in Manchester, New Hampshire, in February.) In 2009, Green Depot expanded to include a consumer-targeted retail store in New York City and the e-commerce site greendepot.com. The 2,500-square-foot store has everything from flooring to crib bedding, plus a line of cleaning products and paint—from which Elizabeth and Jacob picked no-VOC colors for their bedrooms on opening day. Each item sold meets standards Beatty set (with guidance from the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production in Massachusetts) for performance, health, durability, and resource conservation.

She's also—finally—owning and embracing the environmentalist title that many have thrust upon her. "I had the perception of 'green' as wearing Birkenstocks and saving the world, but it's really about making smarter investments in your health and the health of the planet," she says. "I had been this mainstream person with a normal career, and then this calling picked me. I just think about how what I'm doing now is truly meaningful to me, my kids, and all our futures. I just can't stop."

GREEN GOODS
Clockwise from top left: No-VOC paint; a nontoxic-cleaner refill station; organic items for the nursery; Green Depot's leaf logo, incorporated into the store's lighting; hemp twine colored with low-impact dyes.

SUSTAINING—AND SUSTAINABLE

Three items Beatty can't live without.

ORGANIC HOODED TOWELS
"I love how playful and practical they are." $36; *3sprouts.com for retailers*

RECYCLED GLASSES
"I often give tumblers made from reclaimed wine bottles as gifts." *From* $38 *for 4; greenglass.com*

FRESH SNACK PACKS
"They offer all the convenience of plastic baggies without the waste." *From* $4.50; *greendepot.com*

photographs top: Manuel Rodriguez (5); Raymond Hom (3), prop styling by Julie Ho

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whole health

GOOD CATCH

If only you could tell by sight which fish are perfectly safe for consumption—low in mercury and PCBs—*and* sustainable. (Can you tell which one is suspect in our lineup? See below left.) The next time you're flummoxed at a fish counter or a restaurant, upload the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch free iPhone app (available at iTunes) or text the Blue Ocean Institute at 30644 with "FISH" followed by the name of the fish in question.

SOMETHING FISHY The Spanish mackerel, far left, contains high mercury levels.

photograph by Johnny Miller

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ATTENTION TO PREVENTION

4 STEPS TO WARD OFF PMS

About 85 percent of women experience at least one irritating symptom, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

1 **Get milk (and broccoli)** In a University of Massachusetts study comparing the diets of women who had PMS and those who didn't, the PMS-free set tended to eat foods that were rich in calcium and fortified with vitamin D. Studies in New York City hospitals have also shown that a diet supplemented with at least 1,000 mg of calcium a day can significantly reduce the emotional and physical symptoms of PMS.

2 **Go herbal** German studies have found that women who popped a daily pill made of chasteberry, often used in Europe for PMS, had a reduction in symptoms, especially breast tenderness. Studies from France and Iran have shown that ginkgo biloba significantly relieves the severity of some symptoms.

3 **Move it to keep from losing it** In small, three-month studies, women who did moderate aerobic exercise reported less bloating and fewer mood swings. In an Australian study, aerobic exercise mitigated more symptoms, particularly depression, than weight training.

4 **Try the talking cure** A UK study found that 10 sessions of cognitive behavioral therapy were as effective as 20 mg daily of an antidepressant for those suffering from PMDD, the more severe form of PMS.

BRAIN PICK

RICHARD DAVIDSON: MAPPING MINDFULNESS

WHO
Richard Davidson, Ph.D., loves nothing better than to sit and look at the view—as long as it's of a left prefrontal cortex. Director of the Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Davidson has spent a good part of his career sliding Buddhist monks into brain scanners and charting how meditation activates the areas responsible for positive emotions (such as that scenic cortex). The idea that the brain can be trained into a more beautiful mind has major implications: Even the most distressed and brooding soul can learn to be more optimistic and resilient.

THE SCOOP Davidson is about to open what he hopes will be "the culmination of my life's work"—the Center for Investigating Healthy Minds. This consortium of researchers in contemplative neuroscience will launch studies in a local school system to explore whether contemplative-style interventions (like meditation and yoga breathing practices) can help children focus and better regulate their emotions. The researchers are already studying prison inmates and returning war vets to see if such interventions can ease their return to mainstream life.

CELEB CRED The Dalai Lama will help inaugurate the center on May 16.

NOBEL-PRIZE WORTHY? In the next five years, Davidson aims to investigate whether contemplative practices can produce changes that enhance well-being not only in the brain, but also on the genetic level.

IF THERE'S ONE THING HE KNOWS, IT'S ...
"That kindness is not a fixed trait but can be enhanced with training." Many forms of meditation can help; Western religions offer similar practices. And you don't have to become a monk or devotee, Davidson says. "Even a few minutes a day can make a discernible difference." —LIZ BRODY

HERB 1-2-3

DANDELION TINCTURE

An herbal extract—known as a tincture—of dandelion root can help keep digestion running smoothly, ease skin conditions like eczema, and increase your energy. See recipe below.

STEP 1 Fill a quart-size jar halfway with dried dandelion root (available at jeansgreens.com). Pour 80- to 100-proof brandy or vodka to a level 2 or 3 inches above the root when settled. Cover tightly.

STEP 2 Shake daily for a month. If herbs expand above the liquid, bacteria will breed; add alcohol if necessary to completely cover the herbs.

STEP 3 After a month, place cheesecloth in a mesh strainer set over a measuring cup. Pour tincture through the strainer. Discard the herbs. Pour into a 2-oz. amber bottle with a dropper top. A standard dose is 20 to 40 drops (1/2 to 1 tsp.) of tincture sipped in warm water 3 times a day. (The amount of alcohol is small, but ask your doctor before using.) —TANIA HANNAN

photographs clockwise from top left: istockphoto.com; Raymond Hom, styling by Julie Ho

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CURE OR COME *ON*?

RELIEF FOR RINGING EARS

If you suffer from tinnitus—a constant ringing, buzzing, or swishing sensation in the ears commonly caused by exposure to excessive noise—the condition can seem hopeless. Your curiosity might have been piqued by herbal tinnitus relief formulas, made with ginkgo biloba and zinc, which supplement makers say can reduce symptoms. But the studies have been small and inconclusive. "If they do make a patient healthier, that's great, but it's not attacking the problem head-on," says Jennifer DuPriest, associate executive director of the American Tinnitus Association. A better bet: New studies of music and other sound therapies are showing, through imaging, where and how the auditory system has been affected. It's possible to isolate the frequency at which people are experiencing tinnitus, and customized sound therapies can be created to match the frequency. In one study, this reduced tinnitus symptoms for 68 percent of the patients. For more info, go to ata.org.

—MICHELLE HERRERA MULLIGAN

INTEGRATIONS

Q&A WITH WOODSON MERRELL, M.D.

Chairman of the Department of Integrative Medicine at Beth Israel Medical Center and coauthor of *Power Up: Unleash Your Natural Energy, Power Up Your Health, and Feel 10 Years Younger*

Q I toss and turn all night. Is there any way I can cure my insomnia?

A I'm assuming your insomnia isn't stemming from a purely physical complaint, such as chronic pain, a sinus infection, acid reflux, mechanical obstruction (such as snoring), or sleep apnea. And you probably know that caffeine and alcohol inhibit restful sleep. If you can rule out the above, your difficulty in falling asleep is most likely due to your inability to turn off your mind. Exercise during the day can help, as can meditation. It's also necessary to practice what's called sleep hygiene: doing relaxing things in the hour before sleep. This includes turning off all electronic devices and perhaps taking a warm bath with salts or lavender oil; listening to calming music or reading a calming book; or even doing breath-based meditative exercises.

A more common sleep problem is when you're exhausted and fall asleep immediately, but wake up three or four hours later. For this issue I love the technique I call dream remembrance. When you begin to wake up, you're always coming out of a dream (even if you think you aren't) from the more active REM stage. Hold on to that dream tenaciously—even if you're falling off a cliff. In my experience with patients, if you cling to the dream, you will go back into the next REM cycle at least 50 percent of the time. If you start thinking conscious thoughts—and the thoughts are almost always negative in this "hour of the wolf"—you'll be awake and struggling for the next hour or two. You'll see the negative thought trying to come into your consciousness, but don't pick it up. Keep focusing on the dream. And if you lose the dream, focus on breath awareness, and your mind will allow your brain to take you back into sleep.

B+S ONLINE For answers to more questions and to ask your own, go to **wholeliving.com/doctor-merrell**

BUZZWORTHY MEDICINE

HOW HONEY CAN HEAL

Honey has been used as medicine for eons, but it's only in the last 100 years that its antibacterial abilities have come to light—properties explored in Nathaniel Altman's new book, *The Honey Prescription.* What keeps the bacteria away? The high ratio of sugar to water leaves little room for microorganisms to penetrate their way through moisture. It also has an acidic nature and contains an enzyme that produces hydrogen peroxide. While everyone's heard that honey can soothe a sore throat, studies have shown that some varieties may also help treat gingivitis, yeast infections, and burns. From Altman, here are three other uses that you might find surprising.

1 FEVER BLISTER
When the fever blister is about to emerge, apply raw honey to the area several times a day and before bed.

2 BEE STING
Apply honey directly to the area.

3 CONSTIPATION
Upon rising, add 1 tablespoon of honey to a 12-oz. glass of lukewarm water. Drink on an empty stomach.

photographs clockwise from top left: Johnny Miller, styling by Julie Ho; Raymond Horn, styling by Julie Ho; courtesy of Woodson Merrell

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3 MOVES FOR STRONGER, PAIN-FREE KNEES

FITNESS FIX

These exercises, according to a study in *The American Journal of Sports Medicine*, help strengthen muscles that protect the anterior cruciate ligament, which is particularly vulnerable to injury in women. The moves are beneficial for anyone trying to strengthen the knees—especially for tennis, trail running, or activities that require sudden lateral movement.

1 WALKING LUNGE
TO BUILD STABILITY

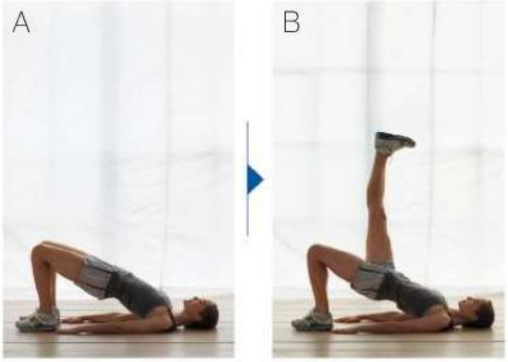
From standing position (A), step forward into a lunge with your right leg, so that your right thigh is even with the ground and your left heel is lifted (B). Square your right knee over your ankle, but not past your toes. Now, pushing forward off your hind leg, lunge forward onto your left leg. Do 3 sets of 8.

2 VERTICAL JUMP
TO STRENGTHEN LEGS AND HIPS

Stand facing forward with hands at your sides. Slightly bend your knees with your weight on your toes (A), then jump vertically (B). Important: Be sure to land on the balls of your feet, with your knees bent and your hips straight. Then slowly roll your feet back to your heels. Do 20 times.

3 COOL-DOWN STRETCH
TO LENGTHEN HIP AND BUTTOCK MUSCLES

Lie with your knees bent and your feet on the ground. Lift your hips (A) and squeeze in your buttocks. Keeping your hips up, extend right leg vertically (B). Lower that leg and lift your left one. Do 30 times on each side. —MHM



photographs by Johnny Miller, wardrobe styling by Sabine Feuilloley, hair and makeup by Gigi Gommers, prop styling by Elizabeth Adler. Model is wearing ESS nylon sport bra by Falke, $50, sportperfect.com; Swiftly Racerback T-shirt, $52, and Leader Of The Track shorts, $54, by Lululemon, both at lululemon.com; running lightweight socks by Nike, $8, and Lunarglide sneakers by Nike, $100, both at nikecom.

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CHECKING IN

May 10 is National Women's Checkup Day: Here's what to know before you go.

BY CARLENE BAUER

Women don't need to be told to go to the doctor; men are 25 percent less likely to make a visit, says the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. But can you learn to be an even better patient? Mina Ma, M.D., associate clinical professor of internal medicine and health services research at UCLA's David Geffen School of Medicine, and Samantha Feder, M.D., director of ambulatory gynecological care at New York City's Roosevelt Hospital, give the inside scoop.

B+S ONLINE Learn about which type of physician might be best for you at **wholeliving.com/holistic-doctors**

FYI	THE GENERAL PRACTITIONER SAYS...	THE GYNECOLOGIST SAYS...
WHEN TO GO	> Get a physical around your birthday. > Try to avoid winter months. "My office tends to fill up because of the flu," Ma says.	> Don't go while you're menstruating. > For the best possible pap test results, refrain from sex a few days before your appointment.
WHAT TO BRING	> A list of medications and supplements > Notes about anything you've seen a specialist for, and the diagnoses > Radiology reports from mammograms, X-rays > Immunization records	> A list of medications and supplements > A list of allergies > Your family history > Your cancer history > Your surgical history
WHAT TESTS TO GET	> Cholesterol and blood pressure workups > Often a blood chemistry panel, which can include salt levels, kidney and liver function, and glucose levels (relevant for tracking diabetes) > A mammogram at 40 or 50, depending on your family history > A colonoscopy at 50	> Pap smears every one to three years, depending on your age, STD history, number of partners, immune status, and HPV status. "Since the pap smear guidelines have recently changed, discuss with your gynecologist how often you actually need one," Feder says. > Gonorrhea and chlamydia, if sexually active
TESTS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW YOU NEED	> A skin checkup. Unless you have a serious condition, your GP can do that screening. > Vaccines for the flu, tetanus, or pneumonia, depending on your age. "People only think of the tetanus shot as the one they got as a kid," Ma says, "but you need one every 10 years. Some shots you need again in adulthood."	> HPV testing, if you're over 30 "However, I don't want patients to think that because they don't have HPV, they can visit me every three years," Feder says. "They still need a pelvic and breast exam once a year."
QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK	"Your doctor should be picking up on physical clues that might have a mind-body connection, but do speak up about whatever emotional problems you're going through," Ma advises. "Many conditions, such as irritable bowel syndrome or chronic pain, are multifactorial, and the psychological issues involved with them need to be dealt with too."	"You have to be empowered enough to talk about embarrassing things—like whether lack of interest in sex is linked to depression, or what risky behavior might mean," Feder says. "And your doctor should be open enough to allow you to ask those questions. Ideally, you ought to be able to talk to your doctor about anything, and if you can't, you need to find a new doctor."

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IS YOUR WATER SAFE? GULP!

With recent reports of contaminated H_2O, it's no wonder people are worried. Use our guide to keep what you drink in the clear.

BY JANELLE SORENSEN

"**IN AN AGE** when man has forgotten his origins and is blind even to his most essential needs for survival, water along with other resources has become the victim of his indifference," wrote Rachel Carson in *Silent Spring*, her seminal work of environmentalism, in 1962. Almost 50 years later, this vital resource is still endangered, but the masses are beginning to pay attention—especially to what's flowing from their faucets. A 2009 Gallup Poll found that 84 percent of Americans said they worried a "great deal" or a "fair amount" about pollution of drinking water.

There's certainly cause for concern. Our waterways may not be as thick with oil and sludge as they were before the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act were passed in the 1970s, but today's threats may be even more insidious, precisely because they're so invisible. The chemical traces of modern day consumption and convenience—from pharmaceuticals and personal-care products to solvents, repellents, and more—are now ubiquitous in our waterways. And with hundreds of new chemicals created every year, it's basically impossible to know exactly what impact this worrisome soup might have on our earth.

Last November, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) released an analysis of nearly 20 million drinking water test results that identified more than 300 pollutants in tap water—more than half of which aren't subject to any regulation. Many have known health effects, like

photograph by Raymond Hom, prop styling by Julie Ho

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increasing the risk of cancer or learning disabilities. Eighty-seven of the regulated contaminants found had levels above health guidelines, including radioactive radium-226 and nitrate from fertilizer runoff.

Similarly, as an investigative report by *The New York Times* called "Toxic Waters" stated, "More than 62 million Americans have been exposed since 2004 to drinking water that did not meet at least one commonly used government health guideline intended to help protect people from cancer or serious disease."

With news like this, it's understandable that people are concerned. But it's important to realize that part of the reason we're finding such high levels of contaminants is because technology has improved. "Today, we can detect contaminants at smaller levels than ever before," says Greg Kail of the American Water Works Association, an international nonprofit scientific and educational society dedicated to the improvement of drinking water quality. Before you swear off water completely, rest assured the U.S. still has some of the safest drinking water in the industrialized world. And filtration systems can help get the "uh-oh" out of your H_2O. Water is the most important fluid you can give your body—so it's worth paying attention to what's on tap.

WHAT'S IN YOUR WATER, ANYWAY?

This is a "precipitator," a device often used by salespeople who sell home filtration systems. As the minutes pass, more and more materials emerge from the water. Although your body could do without contaminants such as metals and chlorates, other compounds, like calcium and magnesium, are necessary and good for you. An extensive (and expensive) system isn't always needed to clean up your water—it all depends on what's in it. (See "Pick a Water Filter," next page.)

THE SOLUTIONS

Following years of lobbying by environmental organizations, Congress is weighing legislation that would clean up our water. For example, current bills under consideration include the Clean Water Restoration Act, which would expand the federal government's ability to protect the nation's waters and an overhaul of the Toxic Substances Control Act, which would help prevent the use and release of chemicals that pose health risks. The Obama administration's 2011 budget includes funds to increase investment in water research and infrastructure.

The EPA's Office of Water emphasizes that the quality of drinking water varies from place to place, depending on the condition of its source and the treatment it receives. Every tap releases a distinct glass of water, and you can—and should—find out how healthy yours is.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Get water wise. If you drink tap water, visit the EPA's Safewater site (epa.gov/safewater/ccr/) to see if your community's Consumer Confidence Report is available. The CCR indicates what tests have been done to local water and what contaminants have been found. You can also visit the EWG's Tap Water Database (ewg.org/tap-water) and enter your zip code to see what's been found in your water. If you have a private well, you'll have to individually determine what risks you face and what you should test for. To do that, call your local health department, which can tell you the sources that could contaminate your groundwater and recommend a professional to test it. (A do-it-yourself kit might suffice.) Private well owners should test their water at least annually.

Take a peek at your plumbing. Lead, a potent neurotoxic substance, used to be a mainstay of plumbing pipes until a national ban was enacted in 1986. Even if you have newer plumbing, the pipes connecting your home to the main municipal lines, the solder used on copper pipes, and faucet fixtures may contain lead. The only way to know for sure what your water's contaminated with is by using a drinking water

photographs by Johnny Miller

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MARTHA

test kit, which you can get at a hardware store. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers advice for dealing with lead in drinking water (cdc.gov/nceh/lead/). Before drinking or cooking it, let the water run for one to two minutes if the faucet hasn't been turned on in six hours. Use cold water for cooking; hot water is more likely to contain higher levels of lead leached from the pipes. Boiling water does not reduce lead levels and can actually increase the concentration of metals.

Skip bottled water. Bottled water is not necessarily any safer than the tap variety. In fact, it's estimated by the EWG that 25 percent of bottled water *is* tap water (sometimes treated, sometimes not). Not only is bottled water subject to fewer regulations than tap water, the manufacturing and disposal of those billions of plastic bottles also creates considerable pollution that contaminates drinking water even more.

Find a filter. Two of the most common filter types rely on carbon (which is positively charged and highly absorbent) or reverse osmosis (through a semipermeable membrane that separates impurities from the water). Check out our recommendations or use the EWG's water filter buying guide (ewg.org/tap-water/getawaterfilter) to find exactly what suits your needs and budget.

Do your part. Never flush medications or other substances that could contaminate water, like toxic cleaning agents, pesticides, and automotive products, down the toilet or sink. Our bodies are about 60 percent water, and 70 percent of our world is covered by this important resource. Isn't it time we took care of it?

PICK A WATER FILTER

First consider testing your water so you know what you need to eliminate.

FILTER	INFO
PUR CR-6000C 2-Stage Water Pitcher ($20; *purwater.com*)	A basic carbon filtration pitcher; reduces copper, lead, mercury, microbes, and some pharmaceuticals.
AQUASANA AQ-4000 Complete Countertop Filtration System ($125; *aquasana.com*)	A carbon countertop filtration system reduces the same contaminants as above and can be easily installed on any standard kitchen faucet.
INSTAPURE F8(C) Ultra Tap Water Filter System ($40; *instapure.com*)	This carbon-filter faucet system includes a light that flashes when the filter needs to be replaced.
WATTS PREMIER WP-5 Reverse Osmosis System ($229; *wattspremier.com*)	The reverse osmosis under-sink system filters some contaminants that carbon doesn't get, like arsenic and nitrates.
PELICAN PC600 Premium Whole House Water Filter ($700; *pelicanwater technologies.com*)	A carbon filter for the whole house means that all your water is filtered, including showers, tubs, and sinks.

Note: Product recommendations are not endorsements. Check with manufacturers for details on what contaminants are addressed and to what degree. Product prices may vary.

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whole beauty

THE BRONZE AGE

Bronzer is the quickest way to wake up your skin after a long winter's nap. For a sun-kissed glow, swipe it on your cheekbones, forehead, chin, down your nose, and along your jawline, says Jessa Blades, a makeup artist based in Brooklyn, New York. Two to try: Almay Powder Bronzer ($10; *drugstore.com)* and Jane Iredale Brush-Me Bronze Bronzing Powder ($44; *shop .janeiredale.com).*

photograph by John Dolan, hair and makeup by Dale Johnson

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GRAPE EXPECTATIONS

You're probably already downing grapes for their antioxidants and Merlot for its high levels of resveratrol—now it's time to feed those benefits to your skin. Grapeseed oil brings skin-healing properties to moisturizers. "Unlike other oils, which can be heavy or greasy, it's light, easily absorbed, and creates a protective layer to lock in moisture," says Janice Cox, author of *Natural Beauty at Home*. —JESSICA LOTHSTEIN

BUY

GRAPESEED OIL–BASED LOTIONS

A few of our favorites:

1 **Jergens Naturals** Skin Renewing Daily Moisturizer. $7; *drugstore.com*

2 **Aura Cacia** Patchouli Sweet Orange Aromatherapy Massage Cream. $9; *auracacia.com*

3 **SEED** Grape Seed Enriched Nourishing Body Lotion. $9; *seed .alice.com*

DIY

MAKE YOUR OWN GRAPESEED BODY OIL

Grapeseed oil is light, unscented, and mixes well with other oils and herbs.

Preparation

The easiest way to create your own moisturizer is to add oil to oil. Pick an essential oil with a smell you love (try lavender, rose, or orange), and mix a few drops into grapeseed oil. For a more complex formula, add herbs or citrus—like lavender, rosemary, orange peel, or rose petals—that you can easily dry out in a warm oven (fresh herbs and fruit will cause bacteria growth) and let sit for a few days. Shake before each use.

EYE DOCS

Eye creams aren't one-size-fits-all, so target your main concern.

PROBLEM

DARK CIRCLES

Peter Thomas Roth Power K Eye Rescue contains vitamin K to lighten. $100; *peterthomas roth.com*

PROBLEM

FINE LINES

Fresh Crème Ancienne Eye Cream stimulates collagen with sea buckthorn. $95; *fresh.com*

PROBLEM

PUFFY EYES

Clinique All About Eyes Serum De-Puffing Eye Massage contains caffeine to reduce swelling. $26; *clinique.com*

photographs by Raymond Hom, styling by Julie Ho

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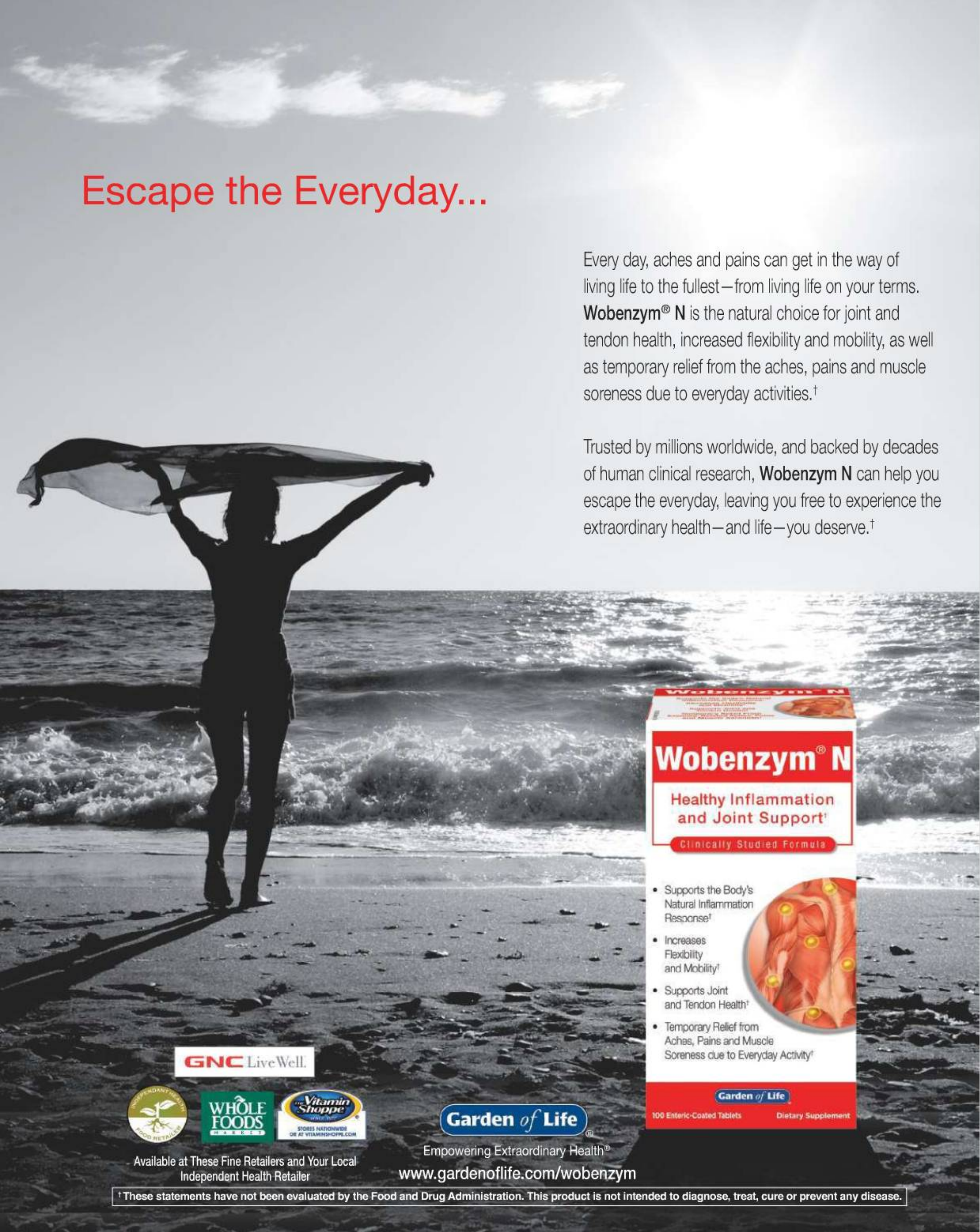

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TEST-DRIVE

NAIL POLISH REMOVER

We'd thought effective eco-friendly nail polish removers were like unicorns—nonexistent, though we wanted to believe. These, however, work like magic.

1 KARMA ORGANICS NAIL POLISH REMOVER
The biodegradable solution won over deputy editor Olessa. "It went to work quickly." $12; *karmaorganicspa.com*

2 PRITI SOY POLISH REMOVER
"This removed polish easily, had a big hit of citrus, and didn't leave an oily mess," said associate art director Nicolette. $23; *pritinyc.com*

3 PEACE KEEPER ECO-EASY NAIL POLISH REMOVER
"I loved the minty smell and felt good using something that's so gentle," said Nicolette. $10; *iamapeacekeeper.com*

4 A BEAUTIFUL LIFE SOY POLISH REMOVER
Editorial assistant Ana liked the soft scent and speedy removal. "It didn't leave any residue." $20; *abeautifullife.com*

SKIN STAT

Between 1980 and 2004, the annual incidence of melanoma among young women in the U.S. increased by 50 percent. But when detected early, melanoma has a cure rate of 99 percent. To find a free screening in your area this month, visit www.aad.org/screenings

MELANOMA DIAGNOSES

1980
9.4 CASES PER 100,000 WOMEN

2004
13.9 CASES PER 100,000 WOMEN

NATURAL GURU

ASK DAVID BRONNER

The president of Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps (and grandson of the original Dr. Bronner) on the importance of fair trade and why cleanliness is next to godliness.

Q Your philosophy is that responsible business goes beyond organic farming. Can you elaborate?

A We're not only organic, but also fair-trade certified, which is about paying good wages and treating people right. We source our ingredients from all over the world, from Ghana to Sri Lanka, and we are economically invested in those communities.

Q Each of your labels has 3,500 words on it, many of which are about spirituality. What does that have to do with soap?

A My grandfather [who started the company 60 years ago] wrote those labels because he lost family in the Holocaust and came out of that experience with an urgent passion to unite people to get over the trivial things that divide us. Just as it says on the label, he felt we are "All-One."

Q The label also says "18-in-1 uses." Really?

A Really. People are always writing to tell us about other uses they've found, like washing the car or spraying house plants to keep bugs away. [Check out *drbronner.com* for more.] My grandfather was ahead of his time, pushing for a more simplified life. He was witnessing chemicals being dumped into the supply chain in the 1940s and warning people: "Hey! You need to watch out! There are going to be consequences." And that still resonates with people today. —J.L.

photographs this page by Raymond Hom, styling by Julie Ho, David Bronner portrait courtesy of David Bronner

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SHIELD YOUR SKIN

WHEN YOU HEAR "SKIN CARE," you probably think of the pots of nice-smelling cream on your bathroom shelf. But we should be protecting our skin the way we'd guard anything valuable: New research shows that the body's largest organ is highly susceptible to everyday environmental assaults. "Think about your car; a day or two after you get it back from the car wash, you can already see that dirty film building back up again," says Seth Matarasso, M.D., a clinical professor of dermatology at the University of California School of Medicine in San Francisco. "The same thing is happening to your skin."

OUTDOORS The air out there isn't as fresh as you might think; ozone is a major factor that may be taking a toll on our epidermis. "Exposure to ozone increases your risk for rashes and inflammatory skin diseases like eczema," says Dennis Gross, M.D., a Manhattan dermatologist and author of *Your Future Face*. Studies show that for every 1 percent reduction in the ozone layer, rates of non-melanoma skin cancer go up by 2 percent. Increasing UV exposure means more sunburns, but don't wait until you're red to worry. "We know now that the sun starts to cause free-radical damage and stress well before you burn," says Jeannette Graf, M.D., a dermatologist in Great Neck, New York. Traffic pollution is another culprit: It contains nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide, chemicals that interfere with the skin's ability to manufacture collagen, which keeps it firm and healthy.

INDOORS Pollutants don't have to come from smokestacks: Plasticizing chemicals such as phthalates and formaldehyde give off gas constantly from our furniture, carpets, shower curtains, cleaning products, and other household goods. According to a 2006 study, published in the journal *Clinical and Experimental Allergy*, normal levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) present in indoor air could damage your skin's epidermis layer and aggravate eczema.

THE SOLUTIONS While of course you can't spend your life in a biohazard suit, the right strategies can help protect and strengthen your body's first line of defense: your skin. Eat a healthy, antioxidant-rich diet, drink plenty of water, and add skin-protecting products to your arsenal. Look for antioxidants to help fend off attacks from environmental aggressors, and a high SPF to protect skin from the sun. —VIRGINIA SOLE SMITH

THE BEST DEFENSE

Weapons to battle the daily onslaught of ozone, smog, and smoke.

FACE

Omega-3 and omega-7 fatty acids in **REN** Hydra-Calm Global Protection Day Cream strengthen. $55; *sephora.com*

ANNEMARIE BORLIND Orange Blossom Energizer is rich in antioxidants from blood oranges. $36; *borlind.com*

AVEENO Positively Ageless Sunblock Lotion SPF 70 for Face also features antioxidants. $11; *drugstore.com*

BODY

Vitamin B5 and glycerin in **EUCERIN** Daily Skin Balance Skin-Fortifying Body Lotion are nourishing. $10; *drugstore.com*

SEA ENZYME Ultra-Umbrella Environmental Protection Moisturizer has shea butter. $40; *seaenzymeca.com*

photographs this page from top by Hugh Arnold, Raymond Hom (5)

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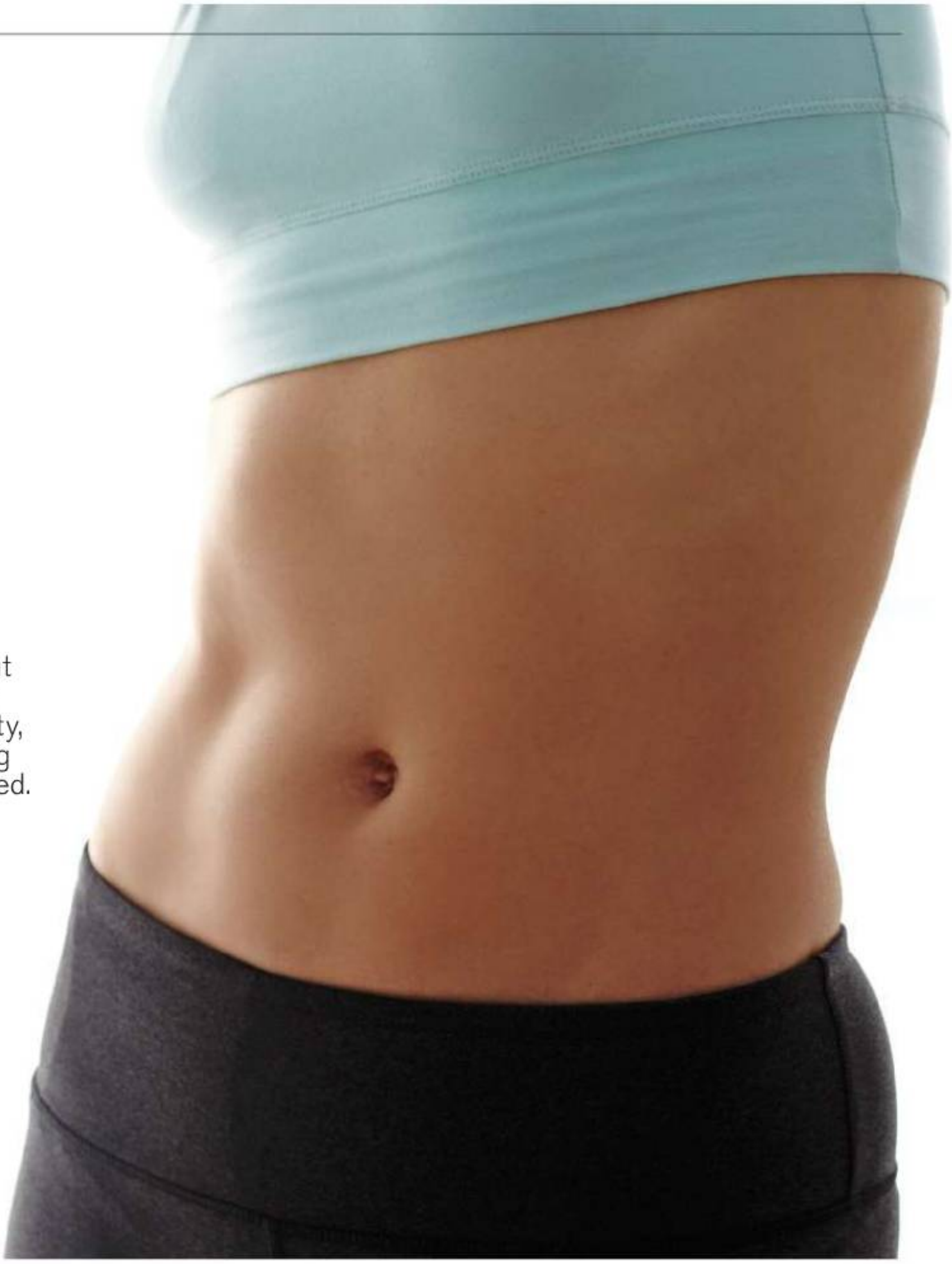

Find Your Center

The best core workout is about much more than rippling abs: It combines strength with agility, balance with movement, leaving you stronger and more grounded.

BY TERRI TRESPICIO

POOR CORE. For centuries, we've tried to beat the belly into submission with everything from whalebone corsets and girdles to *Abs of Steel* and other torturous, crunch-centric workouts.

We've got nothing against that yearned-for washboard, but let us make the case for a kinder, gentler (and more holistic) view of this long-scrutinized part of the body. If we take a cue from Eastern traditions, the core is not a problem to be tamed but an area to be cultivated, strengthened—even worshipped. In Sanskrit, the core is known as the third chakra or *manipura*, which means a "city of jewels" and refers to the spiritual treasures housed there. In the Taoist tradition, the *dantien*, or "essential self," lives in the center of the belly. "This is the seat of your personal power," says Jasmine Tarkeshi, codirector of Laughing Lotus Yoga Center in San Francisco and New York City. "It's your inner radiance, the essence of your greatness and courage."

By the way, we're not talking about the few square inches of muscle around the navel. The core comprises the front, back, and sides of the body, and not just the toned parts. "It's your vital organs, too—liver, spleen, intestines, kidneys," says fitness expert Ellen Barrett, creator of the *Fusion Flow* DVD. "We need to energize it through movement, bringing blood flow and oxygen to that area."

A fit core isn't necessarily about tight muscles; it's about being strong, centered, and balanced, says Tammy Wise, founder of BodyLogos, which offers a Taoist approach to fitness. "Core movement has a yin and yang dimension," Wise says. "If you make your abs so hard or tight that they lose their suppleness, your breath and energy can't flow properly."

The following crunch-free core workout will help you get strong yet stay supple, giving you better posture, improved balance—and, yes, a tight and toned belly worthy of worship.

photographs by Johnny Miller, wardrobe styling by Sabine Feuilloley, hair and makeup by Gigi Gommers for Ford Artists, prop styling by Elizabeth Adler, modeling by Sabina Stahl at theyogasequence.com. Sabina is wearing a pale aqua crop top from KD Dance, $28, kddance.com; the Wunder Under Crop pant from Lululemon, $68, lululemon.com; and a whilte underwire sports bra from Falke, $50, sportperfect.com.

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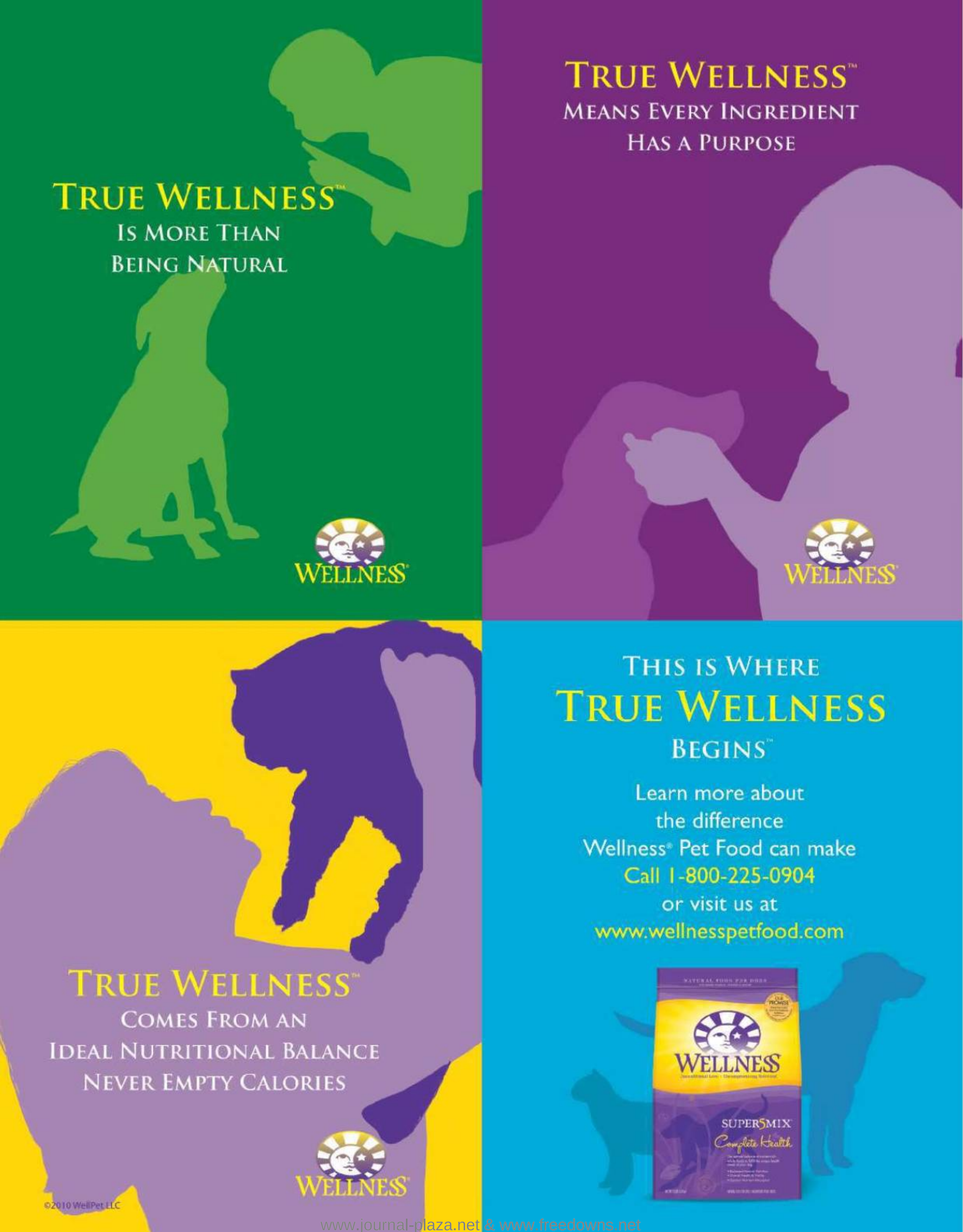

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GO WITH THE FLOW

This series of dynamic, interconnected exercises is designed to stretch and strengthen your core—at the front, back, and sides.

START
Sit on the floor with your feet planted flat and your hands around your upper shins.

BALANCE POINT
Pulling your knees toward you, lift your feet off the floor to form a tight ball with your body. The back will round naturally, but keep your shoulders down. Hold this still-but-active pose for 30 seconds. As you curl around and contract your abdominal muscles, become aware of your center. Feel your belly flattening as you draw your heels closer to your body. Then, let yourself tip back and roll backward along your spine, using momentum to return to the starting pose. Roll again and use that momentum to reach the Crow pose.

CROW
Using the momentum from the previous roll to propel you forward, transfer your weight onto your hands. Don't be intimidated: Crow is more about balance than strength. Depending on what's comfortable for you, either draw your legs up and rest your shins on your upper arms, or keep your toes lightly touching the floor and rest your shins against the backs of your arms. Use your core to balance over your hands for a few breaths.

PLANK
From Crow, shoot (or step) your feet back into the Plank pose, which is basically the top part of a push-up position. Keep your shoulders over your wrists and your body as straight as a board. (Be careful not to let your spine sag in the middle.) Breathe as you continue to draw your belly in and up (without hitching or arching your back).

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FINISH
End the flow in a wide stance, feet pointed out, arms resting by your sides.

BALANCING STICK
From Plank, step your right foot forward between your hands. Engaging your core and your right leg muscles, straighten and lift your body, with your arms straight by your sides. (This pose is also known as Warrior III in yoga.) Look down, keeping your neck in a neutral position, and breathe, sensing your core as it works to balance your body. Take 5 breaths in this position.

ROUND THE WORLD
From Balancing Stick, reach your left leg to the floor a few feet behind you and turn so both feet are parallel, pointing forward. Leading with your left arm, trace a large arc from right to left with both arms, really feeling this luxurious stretch open and release every muscle in your core.

BOLD BREATHING
Turning to the center, lift both arms up to the sky; while straightening your legs, take a deep, full breath, letting your belly expand, and then exhale, contracting your stomach muscles and expanding your back. At the very end of the exhale, bring all your awareness to the area 2 inches below the belly button in a process called "grounding." Do this 5 times, then repeat the flow from the beginning, stepping the left foot forward for Balancing Stick.

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WHAT DO I DO WITH …
MINT?

RECIPES BY CHARLYNE MATTOX
TEXT BY AMANDA GOLD

ACCORDING TO Greek mythology, mint symbolizes hospitality; mortals rubbed the vibrant leaves on the table to welcome the gods. But this aromatic herb, which proliferates in warm months, can do far more than freshen up a table (literally). On the plate, mint can star in both sweet and savory creations. Try it in everything from ice cream to tea, or use it to top lamb chops or a platter of mint-stuffed fish. Not only can mint do wonders for digestion, but its oil can also soothe the skin and sweeten the breath. Hospitality, indeed.

photographs by Raymond Horn, food styling by Charlyne Mattox, prop styling by Michelle Wong

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WHOLE FISH WITH MINT

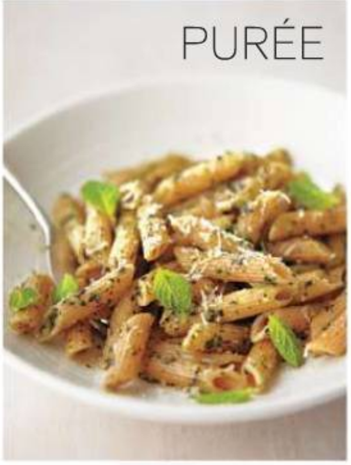
SERVES 4

Have your fishmonger clean and gut the fish so that the cavity is ready to be stuffed. We used striped bass, but trout would work well, too.

1 striped bass (2 lbs.), cleaned
½ oz. ginger, peeled and julienned, about 2 Tbsp.
2 scallions, cut into thin strips
1 serrano or jalapeño pepper, cut into thin strips
1 clove garlic, thinly sliced
4 sprigs fresh mint plus 1 c. fresh mint leaves
Kosher salt and ground pepper
½ tsp. fresh lime juice
1 tsp. vegetable oil
½ c. fresh basil leaves, torn if large

1. Place a wire rack in the bottom of a roasting pan and add an inch of water to the pan. Place pan on the stove over two burners and bring water to a boil. 2. Meanwhile, rinse and dry the fish inside and out. Place on a heat-safe platter and stuff the cavity with half the ginger, scallions, and chile pepper, all the garlic, and 4 sprigs mint. Season with ¼ tsp. salt. Top fish with remaining ginger, scallions, and chile pepper, and season with ¼ tsp. salt. 3. Transfer platter to prepared pan. Cover tightly with foil and steam until opaque throughout, about 15 minutes. Carefully lift platter from pan, retaining the juices. 4. Meanwhile, combine lime juice and oil in a medium-size bowl. Season with ¼ tsp. salt and pepper to taste, and add mint and basil leaves. Toss to coat the herbs. 5. Place herb mixture on top of the fish and serve immediately.

Per serving: 248 calories; 7 g fat.



MINT AND PARSLEY PESTO

SERVES 4 (V)

The pesto can be made ahead and kept in the refrigerator for two to three days. Serve it over whole-wheat pasta.

1 c. fresh mint leaves
½ c. fresh parsley leaves
1 clove garlic
2 Tbsp. pine nuts, toasted
2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan
3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and ground pepper

Pulse mint, parsley, garlic, pine nuts, and Parmesan in a food processor until coarsely chopped. With machine running, add oil in a steady stream. Season with ¼ tsp. salt and pepper to taste.

Per serving: 395 calories; 12 g fat.

B+S ONLINE For more menu ideas, go to **wholeliving.com/mint-recipes.**

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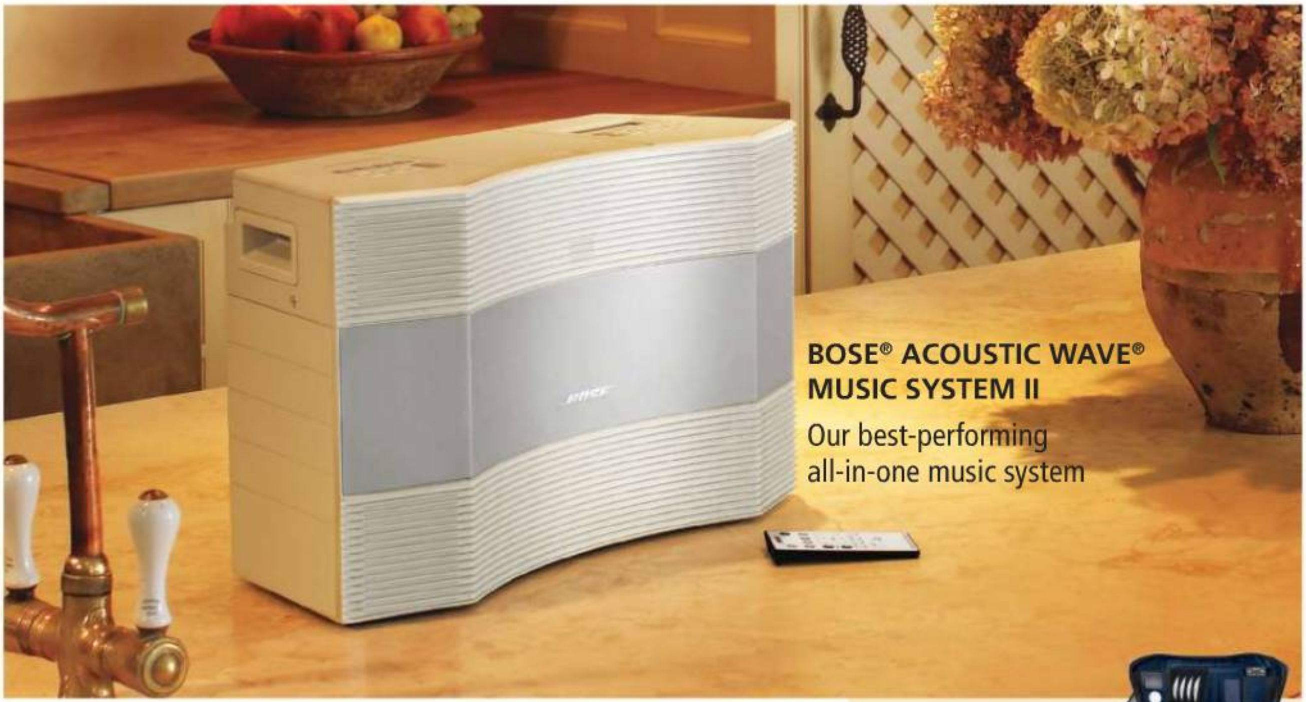
What we hear is:

"I'm sorry I waited so long."



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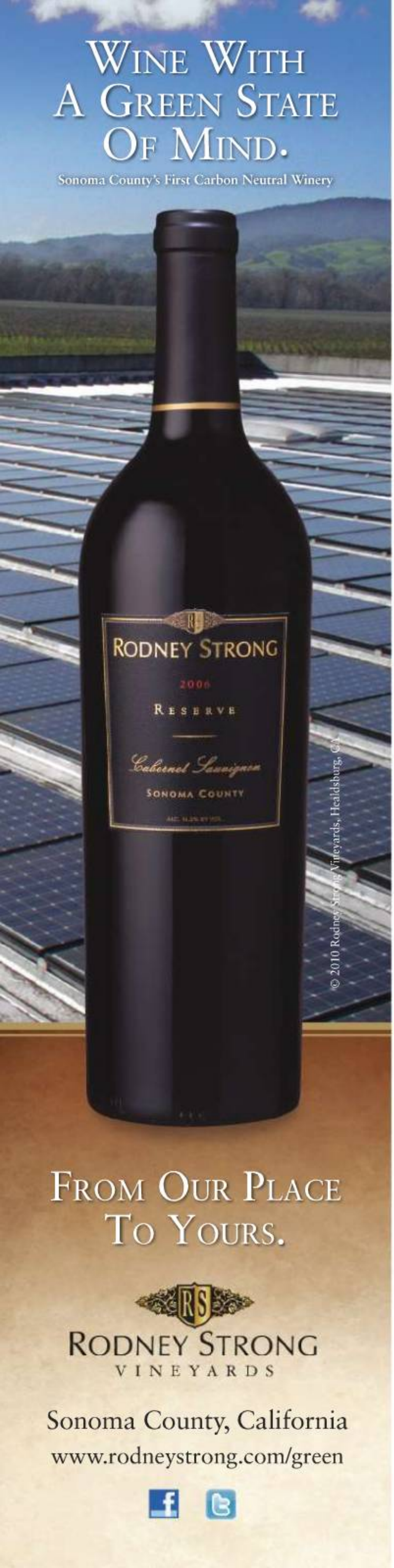

LAMB CHOPS WITH FRESH MINT

SERVES 4 (S)

Frenched lamb chops, trimmed to expose part of the bone, make for a prettier presentation.

2 Tbsp. rice vinegar
3 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
1 tsp. sugar
⅔ c. chopped mint
Kosher salt and ground pepper
8 lamb chops (each 3 oz., ¾-inch thick), frenched

1. In a small bowl, whisk together the vinegar, 2 tsp. of the oil, and the sugar. Add mint and stir to combine. Season with ½ tsp. salt and pepper to taste and set aside. 2. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat, and add the remaining olive oil. 3. Season lamb with salt and pepper. Working in batches, cook chops in skillet until medium rare, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a cutting board and tent with foil. Let rest 5 minutes. 4. Top with the mint mixture and serve immediately.

Per serving: 347 calories; 26 g fat.

(V) **vegetarian** no meat products
(V) **vegan** no animal derivatives
(S) **special diet** no dairy, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, eggs, peanuts, or tree nuts

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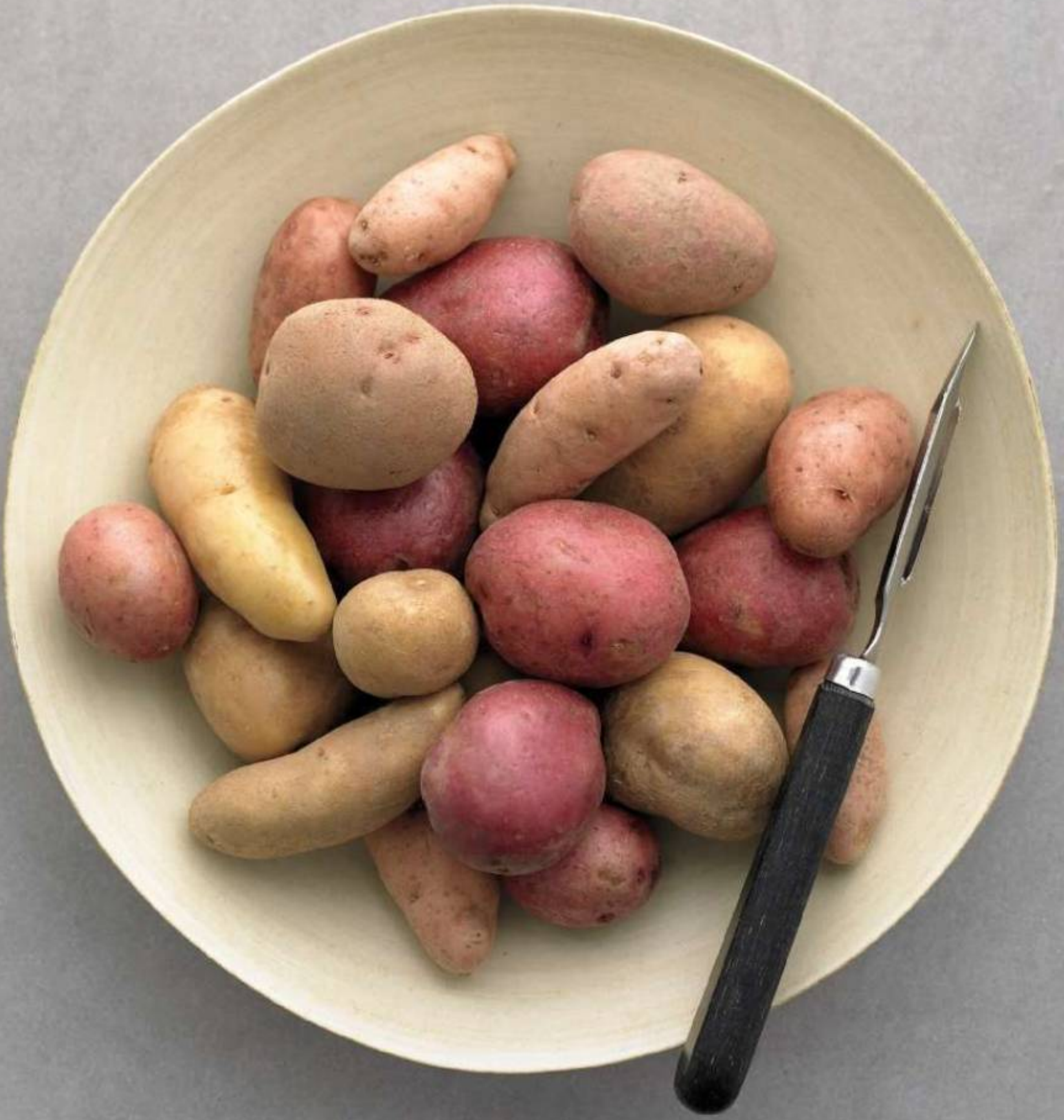

STEALTH HEALTH FOODS

Some of the frumpiest produce in the aisle actually packs all-star health benefits. Maybe it's time to rethink your definition of "superfoods."

BY JOSEPH HOOPER

READ ENOUGH ABOUT superfoods like pomegranates and acaí juice, and you get the impression that more ordinary fruits and vegetables aren't quite so super. That would be a mistake. The latest nutritional science has established that some of the most humdrum-sounding produce, usually relegated to comfort food status—peas, corn, white potatoes, white button mushrooms, and kidney beans—contain some of the best calories on the planet. Notes Julie Upton, M.S., R.D., author of *Energy to Burn*, "Modern medicine is reaffirming what our grandparents told us was inherently good for us."

photograph by Raymond Hom, styling by Julie Ho

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The Bach Emotional Eating Support Kit contains three specific flower remedies created by a doctor over 75 years ago that target core emotional eating issues, helping you manage mindless eating. Found at any Whole Foods.

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LOWLY, YET HEALTHY Potatoes, mushrooms, and peas offer an easy (and cheap) nutritional punch.

WHITE BUTTON MUSHROOMS
Disease-fighting fungus

Bad rap "I think of them of the Rodney Dangerfield of produce—they don't get the respect they deserve," says nutritionist Heidi Skolnik, M.S., coauthor of *The Reverse Diet*.

Stealth Health Rx The mushroom is a nutritional mother lode—a great source of vitamin D (important for bone health), B vitamins (key for heart health), and minerals like potassium and zinc.

Bonus When it comes to disease-fighting phytonutrient compounds, a French research team recently discovered the humble white button mushroom delivers as much or more antioxidant power than pricier exotics like shiitakes and maitakes.

CORN
Surprise antioxidant agent

Bad rap Corn has been unfairly tarred because of its association with the high-fructose corn syrup industrially derived from it.

Stealth health Rx A high-fiber package prevents the sugars in corn from being absorbed too quickly by the body and causing a spike in blood sugar. B vitamins and vision-protecting lutein round out the nutritional perks.

Bonus In a 2004 study, Cornell researchers found that whole grains, including corn, had higher levels of antioxidant compounds more available to the body in bound form (versus the free form found in fruits and veggies). By this method of measurement, corn delivers more than twice the antioxidant punch of spinach or broccoli.

POTATOES
Super starch

Bad rap Potatoes are the most consumed vegetable in the U.S., but they're mostly eaten as saturated-fat-tastic fries and potato chips; even when baked, they're often slathered in butter and sour cream.

Stealth health Rx Strip away the condiments and baked or boiled potatoes are about as nutritious as food gets. Even the middle of a white russet potato is loaded with vitamins B6 and C, potassium, fiber, and a host of phytonutrients.

Bonus They're so satisfying. In 1995, an Australian researcher developed a satiety index and determined boiled white potatoes to be the most filling food.

PEAS
Protein and fiber powerhouse

Bad rap Common wisdom dictates that they're starchy, and most of us grew up eating the canned kind—not exactly a recipe for fresh taste.

Stealth health Rx At 117 calories per cup, you get a fabulous nutritional package: one-sixth of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of protein for the average U.S. female; a generous mix of vitamins C and B; plenty of fiber; plus vitamin K1 (crucial for bone health) and minerals like manganese, potassium, and iron.

Bonus Antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin in peas have been proven to protect the eyes against age-related decline in vision.

KIDNEY BEANS
Heart-friendly legumes

Bad rap While lentils scream "health food store," the forgotten kidney bean is often buried in soups, chiles, and three-bean salads.

Stealth health Rx Kidney beans (like pinto, navy, and black beans) are high in fiber, practically nonfat, and when combined with a whole grain like brown rice or whole-wheat pasta, make a dish that comes close to the protein content of red meat or dairy. In a 1999 epidemiological study that tracked 13,000 male subjects over 25 years, eating more legumes was associated with as much as an 82 percent reduction in the risk of dying from heart disease.

Bonus The complex carbs in kidney beans provide a slow, steady stream of energy. "I'm always amazed that when I use beans in a dish," says nutritionist Ellie Krieger, R.D., "the nutritional value skyrockets." +

photograph by Johnny Miller, styling by Julie Ho

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(NATURAL) SLEEPING BEAUTIES

A bad pillow—too fluffy, too flat, or just plain musty—can leave you more restless than that princess on the pea. Since you spend one-third of your life with your head buried in a pillow, choose one with a chemical-free filling for the most healthful sleep. Now it's possible to find everything from buckwheat to memory foam (if you simply must have it) with no volatile organic compounds. Turn the page to learn what these eco-pillows are made of, and which one suits your sleeping style. BY **SARAH ENGLER**

photographs by Johnny Miller, prop styling by Julie Ho

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YOUR IDEAL PILLOW FILLING will depend on the sleeping position you find most comfortable, says Donna Arand, Ph.D., of the Kettering Sleep Disorders Center in Ohio. Side sleepers require firmer support, back sleepers a medium amount, and stomach sleepers very little. With any new pillow, you'll need a few nights to adjust.

MATERIAL	OUR PICK	BEST FOR	CARE
NATURAL LATEX	**EARTHSAKE LATEX CONTOUR PILLOW** Made of 100 percent naturally hypo-allergenic latex. $92; *earthsake.com*	**SIDE SLEEPERS** The firmness and contoured shape help support the neck and keep the spine aligned.	Hand-wash the latex in warm water with a mild soap, blot with a towel, and let air-dry; machine-wash the case.
BUCKWHEAT	**GAIAM ORGANIC BUCKWHEAT PILLOW** Includes a layer of organic wool to muffle the rustling sound. $99; *gaiam.com*	**FLOPPERS** The hulls move and mold to the head. A zipper lets you add or remove them to adjust the thickness.	Machine-wash the organic cotton case; the hulls can be rinsed in a tub of cool water, drained, and left to air-dry.
MEMORY FOAM	**KEETSA TEA LEAF CONTOUR PILLOW** A greener spin on the favorite foam, with no VOCs. $73; *shop.keetsa.com*	**SIDE OR BACK SLEEPERS** A contoured shape, combined with practically zero resistance, works for side or back recliners.	The bamboo case can be machine-washed, but the foam is highly absorbent and should never get wet.
KAPOK	**EARTHSAKE NATURAL KAPOK FILLED PILLOW** Stuffed with silky fibers from renewable ceiba trees. $49; *earthsake.com*	**BACK SLEEPERS** Much softer than cotton and similar to down, kapok is fluffy and offers minimal resistance.	Machine-wash two at a time with warm water on a gentle setting. Put in a dryer on cool with a few tennis balls until fully dry.
ORGANIC WOOL	**HEART OF VERMONT SOFT WOOL PILLOW** Shorn from organically fed sheep; cleaned without toxins. $85; *heartofvermont.com*	**SIDE SLEEPERS** The firm wool fibers will better support the neck and provide more elevation than a pillow of cotton or kapok.	Spot clean with one part vinegar and two parts water. Fluff in a dryer (on a cool setting) with a tennis ball for 10 to 15 minutes.
ORGANIC COTTON	**PUREREST ORGANIC COTTON PILLOW** Its chemical-free filling is covered with organic cotton damask. $58; *purerest.com*	**STOMACH SLEEPERS** A flat pillow is best for a twisted neck, and the cotton will compress, making the pillow thinner over time.	Cotton will shrink if it gets wet, so keep this pillow out of the washer. Spot clean the cover with vinegar and water.

B+S ONLINE For more ways to create an earth-friendly sleeping space, go to **wholeliving.com/green-bedroom.**

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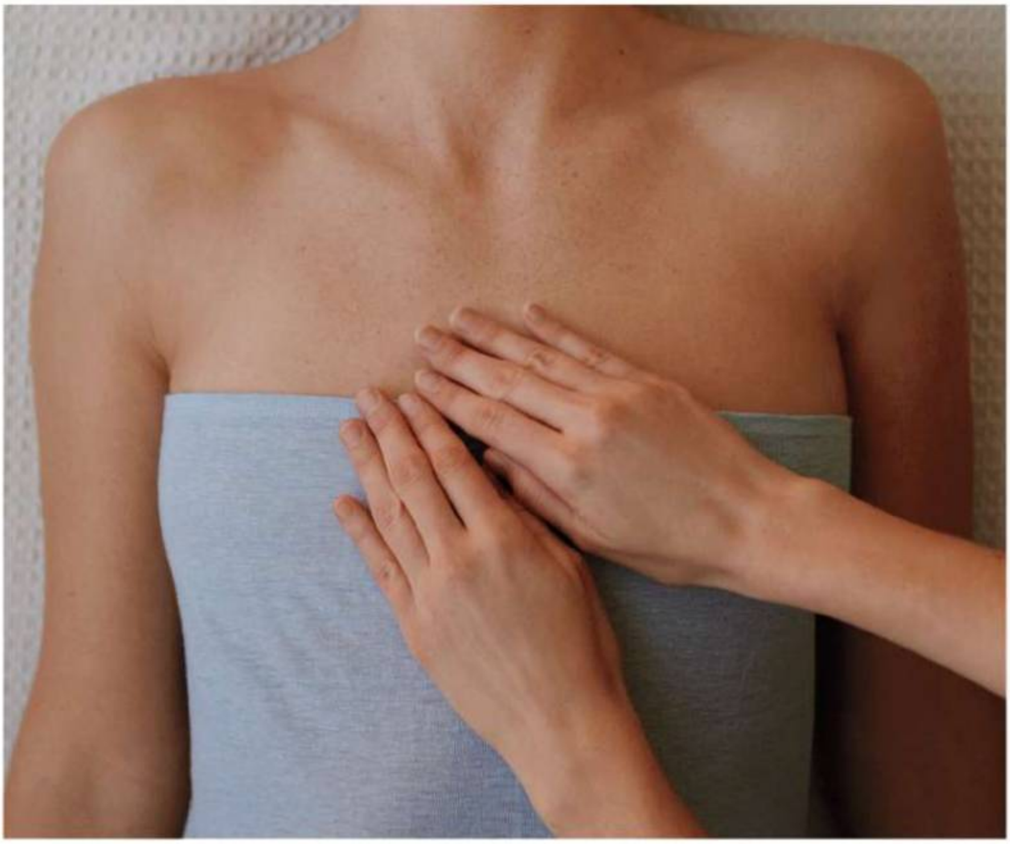

SLOW HANDS Practitioners of Reiki, a Japanese healing technique, say it can reduce even intense stress.

Touch of Grace

She'd always been skeptical of alternative medicine, but when breast cancer struck and anger overwhelmed her, she gave it a go—and found unexpected relief. **BY LYNN DARLING**

THE RAGE HAD BEGUN, as cataclysms often do, suddenly, like the first drops of rain that touch your cheek as you walk down a busy street. You blink and look to the sky and there is not even time to register the idea that a storm is coming before you are drenched to the bone, staggered by the suddenness of it.

For me the moment had come as I lay alone on a high, padded table in a darkened room, which was nearly empty except for the enormous white machine that loomed over me, a dead white plastic thing, like something out of *Star Wars*. I was naked to the waist. My feet were strapped together with a rubber band so that I wouldn't move. My arms were raised above my head, slightly bent at the elbows, my hands fitted into stirrups. It was the first of 37 radiation treatments for breast cancer. I lay there tense and waiting, until a technician reminded me that I had forgotten to remove the pink hospital gown I had been given to wear over my jeans. "You forgot to take off your johnny," she said.

I felt the first tickle of irritation that was only the fanfare for what was to follow. It was that word—*johnny*. It was such a stupidly cute word to designate the thing I wore, the thing that had erased everything distinctive about the women who wore it, the women who waited their turn each day out in the waiting room filled with easy chairs and small tables strewn with magazines and half-done jigsaw puzzles, the women who were sitting there now, their bald heads wrapped in turbans and baseball caps, and wool hats and silk scarves, the women with complexions grayed by chemotherapy, insurance worries, fatigue, and pain. Women sentenced to wonder for the rest of their lives if what was happening to them was for the only time or the first time. It wasn't a johnny we were wearing, I fumed to myself. It was the uniform of the prisoner.

What was wrong with me? I wondered, puzzled by my reaction to such a dumb little detail. I had breezed through the pre-

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treatment session, when the technicians had mapped the tumor site and then tattooed my chest with tiny, permanent blue freckles that would serve as markers for the radiation beams. I joked about being turned into a medieval map, the ones where the dangerous places were marked with the warning THIS WAY THERE BE MONSTERS. And cancer was a monster, against which we had only these primitive options: to burn, to poison, to slice away. With that thought in mind, radiation had reduced itself in my imagination to a mere inconvenience, one that entailed daily visits to the hospital for nearly seven weeks, a minor sunburn, and possibly fatigue.

I LIVE IN VERMONT, WHERE WATER WITCHES ADVERTISE IN THE YELLOW PAGES. SO REIKI WAS A PRETTY MINOR ITEM IN THE CATALOG OF WOO-WOO TO WHICH I INITIALLY DISMISSED IT.

But nothing like the nightmare of chemo. I was not the shell-shocked neophyte of eight months before, reeling from the diagnosis. I was a veteran, of 18 weeks of chemotherapy, of surgery and recovery.

But now, lying on the table, all I could think about was the position I was in, and wonder why it seemed so oddly familiar. Of course: It was the position of erotic welcome, that of a woman lying in bed, smiling at her lover. A wave of humiliation surged through me, so strong I thought it would knock me off the table. I lost all perspective; it didn't matter anymore that I was lucky even to have this option. I felt naked and exposed in a way I never had, the memories of pleasure my body had both given and received violated and debased. Crazy images clashed in my head—Henri Matisse's painting of smiling courtesans, and black-and-white photographs of French women, their heads shaved and their clothes stripped off, branded as collaborators for having slept with Nazis during the war. I thought of my own bald head, and the hair I hadn't had since chemotherapy, and I fell apart. My rib cage heaved, and the tears ran down. The technicians came running into the room. They had to stop the treatment until I could "get control" of myself, as the pale, young doctor attending the debacle had put it.

When it was over, I shook off the abashed young woman who tried to help me off the table and stumbled out of the room, unable to look anyone in the face.

Outside, as I left the waiting room, I saw a small sign REIKI SESSIONS TODAY. I had heard of Reiki before. I live in Vermont, where water witches advertise in the yellow pages. So on the whole, Reiki was a pretty minor item in the ever-growing catalog of woo-woo to which I initially dismissed it.

A Reiki treatment itself is simple. The patient lies down fully clothed in a peaceful setting while the practitioner stands over her and, with a series of lightly placed hand movements, becomes the medium for *chi*, the energy of the universe. The idea is that the practitioner acts as a kind of lightning rod for the energy, bringing equilibrium to distortions emanating from a specific organ, or body part, or the individual's psyche.

I was less than receptive to the idea that some sort of human telephone wire could do any possible good. As a child of the '60s, I weathered many of the experiments the counterculture had to offer, but I have remained a pronounced skeptic about any alternatives to traditional medicine and psychology beyond meditation and yoga.

REIKI 101

What does the word mean?
It comes from two Japanese words—*rei* ("universal") and *ki* ("life energy").

Q Where did it come from?
A The practice originated in the early 1920s, when Mikao Usui, a Japanese sensei, was on a retreat to a holy mountain. It was brought to this country in the late 1930s by Hawayo Takata, a Japanese-American woman.

Q What happens?
A The practitioner places his hands on or just above the body, concentrating on one area at a time. Usually 12 to 15 hand positions are used. When a disturbance in energy flow is detected, it can be brought back into balance. Some people can benefit from just one session.

Q What's the research?
A New York City's Beth Israel Medical Center recently launched a program that includes Reiki as one of five interventions used to create an optimal healing environment on the cancer floor. Says Dr. Woodson Merrell, chairman of Beth Israel's Department of Integrative Medicine, "While the research on its effects on pain, anxiety, and nausea are promising but still may be inconclusive, Reiki is virtually without side effects. What's important is that it gives something positive to a patient—whether it's a transfer of energy or the patient just experiences TLC from the practitioner—that might reinforce the desire to heal."

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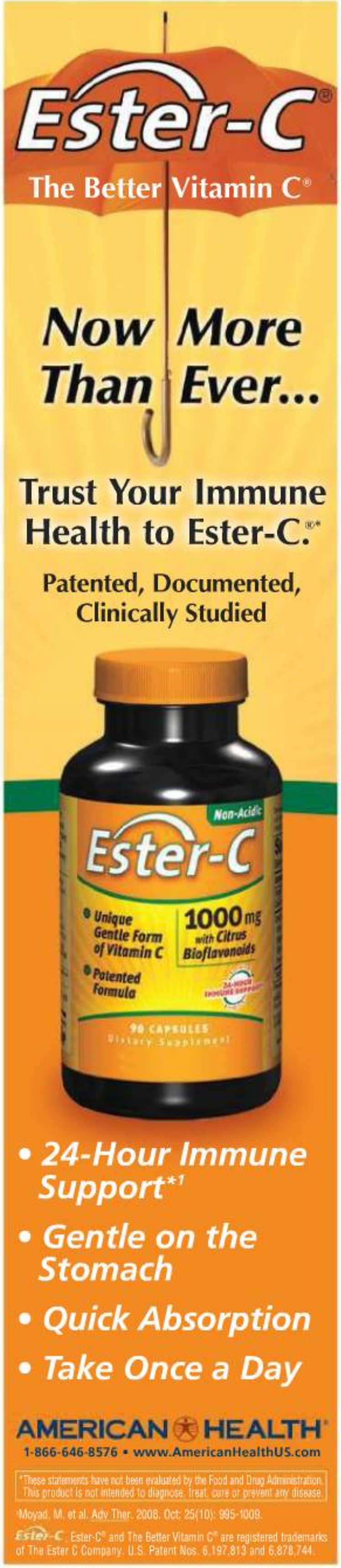

Over the years, I've greeted most of the more out-there stuff with amused indifference, but others have provoked downright hostility. When my husband was diagnosed with lung cancer in 1995, I was infuriated by friends and acquaintances who offered, along with their suggestions of cures to be found in faith healing, shamans, and ground sharks' teeth, the implication that if I didn't get him to try these things, I would be responsible for his death.

Claptrap comes and goes. By the time I was diagnosed, no one was offering me sharks' teeth, but I did read way too many books claiming that people damn themselves to disaster by their own fatalism or failure to lower stress levels. Having breast cancer, I found, was bad enough without the news that it was apparently my own fault.

I took off my shoes, climbed onto a narrow bed, and was soon cocooned under a heavy handmade blanket. There was no sound except for the sighing of the wind in the old wood and the occasional scrabble of small creatures looking for shelter from the cold.

I closed my eyes and tried to meditate, while JoAnne gently placed her hands on my eyes, ears, and head, working her way down to my toes. At first all I felt was the calming warmth of her hands on my eyes. But as I relaxed, I slipped into a state somewhere between waking and sleeping—what scientists studying touch healing call a liminal state, which

JOANNE'S BLUE EYES CONTAINED A TRANQUILITY THAT COULD HAVE CALMED A COBRA, MUCH LESS THE FREAKED-OUT WHIRLIGIG OF NERVES THAT STOOD HUDDLED ON HER DOORSTEP.

Still, nothing I had tried on my own to get control of my anger was working. My rage terrified me: It seemed to come from nowhere. I needed help.

A few days later, I knocked on the door of a well-tended, white wood-frame house that sat under a hill with the propriety of a cat occupying its rightful place in your favorite armchair. A small, softly smiling woman met me at the door. JoAnne's white hair was tucked back in a bun that gave her a sense of timelessness, and her blue eyes contained a tranquility that could have calmed a cobra, much less the freaked-out whirligig of nerves that stood huddled on her doorstep. She led me into a darkened room with the low ceiling and close proportions of very old New England houses.

is said to resemble a spiritual trance or self-hypnosis.

Gradually, all the emotions that had been roiling through me came to Technicolor life, assuming shapes that twisted and transformed themselves. The rage was at first a roaring, pounding wave, slamming into a rocky beach, and then a rain of needles falling all around me. Oddly enough, the cascading imagery wasn't alarming. It seemed natural, as if I were in a waking dream or, to hark back to my hectic youth, an acid trip.

Eventually, the scene changed. I was inside a warm cave, but glaring at me from the darkness was a weasel with sharp and snapping teeth, who ran furiously around the cave, ready to attack. I was afraid, and my mind cartwheeled away. For a while I was aware only of the silence and the cradling hands. Eventually I felt safe enough to return to the cave. I looked around anxiously for the

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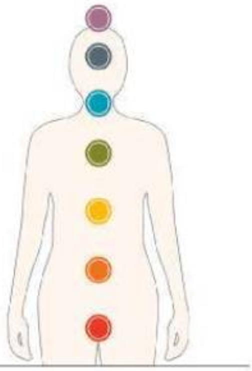
weasel, yet when I found him he was asleep. I wanted to touch him, but somehow I knew that if I did, he would return to his snarl.

At some point in my strange, dreamy state, I left the cave and was standing on a hill, looking into the woods that covered the slope beyond. There was the weasel, running in great looping circles. He was free and far away. I was thrilled, and yet oddly sorry to see him go. He was so strong, so alive. That's when I noticed that in my hand I held a long leash that kept us connected. In that moment, I understood what it meant: The rage I had felt had been scary, but it had also been powerful; it had given me an energy and an authority I hadn't felt since the diagnosis. A part of me didn't want to let that go.

JoAnne ended the session by cupping my heels and then toes in her hands, which gave me a sensation of tremendous safety. When I opened my eyes, I wasn't exactly a cup of softened butter, but I was much, much better. Having seen my emotions, having given them shape and form, they no longer consumed me. I knew the anger was still there somewhere, but it was contained now. It wasn't me.

The next day, a friend asked me if I still felt "that Reiki glow." What I felt wasn't a glow, but something better. It was as if the bands of anger that had been wrapped so tightly around me had released and dropped to the floor. "No," I said. "I feel free."

Does that mean I now believe that the universal life force is transmitting itself through a diminutive woman with a face etched in kindness? No. Not really. It only means that whatever Reiki is, and whether or not, by any quantifiable measure, it works, it works for me.



HIDDEN HEALING SPOTS

In Reiki, chakras are *chi* (life energy) conductors that line the spine. The belief is that when they're blocked (perhaps by an unresolved emotional issue), it affects mental and physical health and can cause illness. Hand positions targeted to the chakras can restore the energy flow. Below, the seven main chakras, a few of the forces they govern, and the colors associated with them; practitioners attuned to them might see the chakras in these different hues.

CROWN
Connection to spiritual realms and pathway to enlightenment, and an entry point for Reiki energy

THIRD EYE
Insight and clairvoyance

THROAT
Speaking, communication, and creative expression

HEART
Joy, compassion, and guidance; another point of energy entry

SOLAR PLEXUS
Confidence and taking action, but also fear and anger

SACRAL
Sexuality and enjoyment of life, along with guilt and our shadow self

ROOT
Food and shelter, and survival instincts

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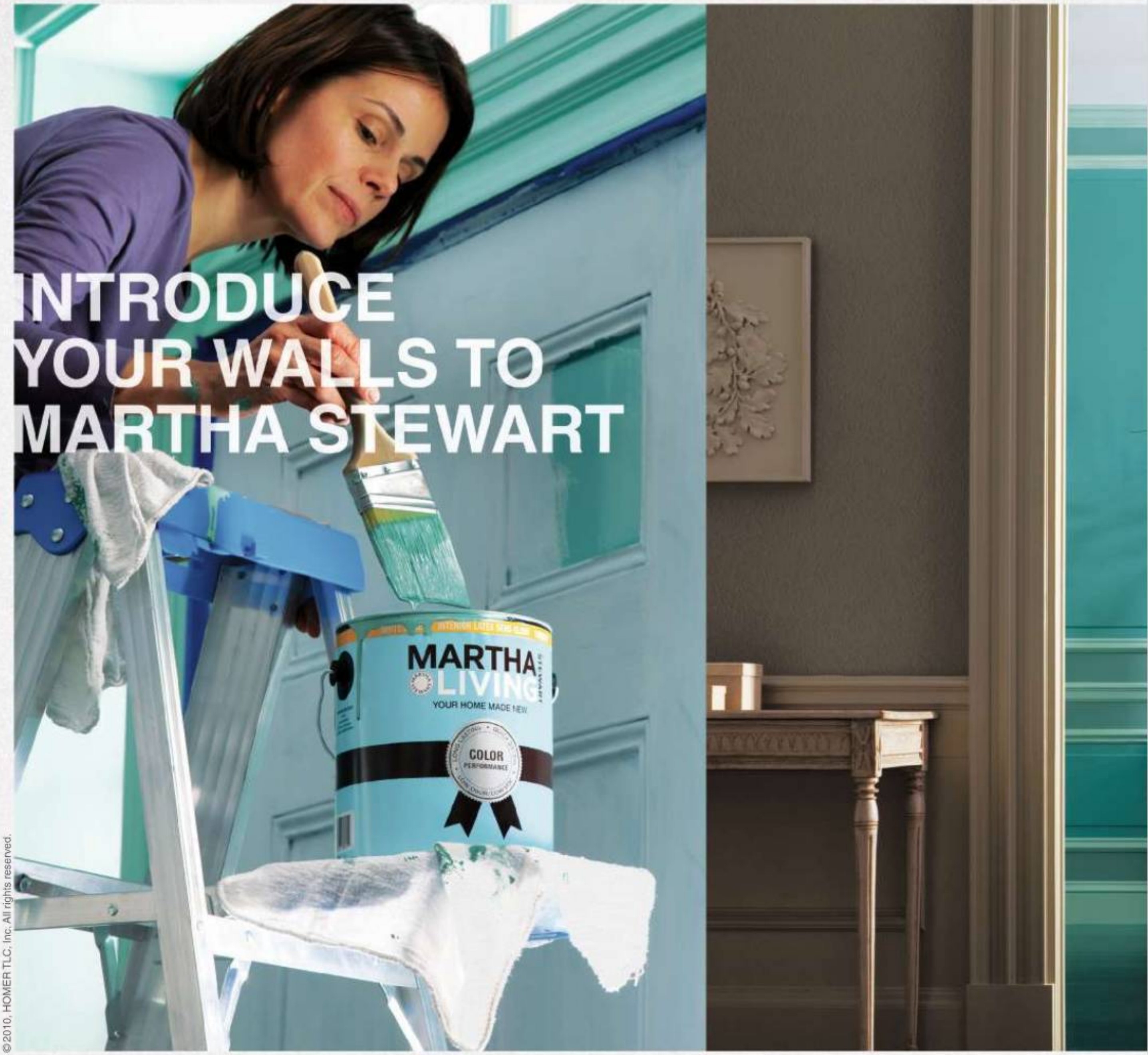

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Pictured: Hummingbird Blue, Sea Glass, and Yucca Plant
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Lost Your Appetite For Sex?

Tune in to your body, and revive your sex drive with mindfulness. (Yes, mindfulness.)

BY KATE HANLEY

DIANNE SIKEL, 40, suspected her sex life was in the toilet when she started tracking her intimate encounters by circling a capital S on her calendar. And she was sure of it when she checked her records and realized that she and her husband of 11 years, Scott, were having sex once every four to six weeks.

"I'm still young, and I love my husband," Sikel says, "but whenever the opportunity arose, I would outthink any sexual feelings." That might mean worrying about her stretch marks, or whether the kids would hear them, or if her latest real estate deal would close. Other times, she was just too tired. So she passed—again and again. And again.

In large-scale surveys of women conducted around the world, approximately 30 percent of respondents—even those in their teens and twenties—report a lack of interest in sex. Lori Brotto, Ph.D., director of the University of British Columbia Sexual Health Lab in Vancouver, has seen countless women who claim to have a flagging libido or none at all. "It's the number 1 complaint I hear," Brotto says. Her patients cite all kinds of reasons, from stress to relationship troubles, but all seem to have one notable commonality: They feel utterly disconnected from their sexuality, as if it were a limb that had been amputated.

"Women say, 'I think I must need more testosterone,'" Brotto says. It's true that balanced levels of reproductive hormones, including estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone, are key to desire, arousal, and pleasure. Yet when Brotto conducted her own research on 250 women with low sexual desire, she found no difference between their levels of testosterone and those in women who reported healthy sex drives.

The problem seems to go beyond the physical mechanisms of arousal. In fact, according to many studies, women's bodies can manufacture physical responses to sexual stimuli even when they're not conscious of it. One review by researchers at

photograph by Johnny Miller, styling by Julie Ho

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the University of Amsterdam found that all types of women—premenopausal and postmenopausal, who reported healthy sexual desire or a low interest in sex—had similar levels of heightened vaginal blood flow when researchers showed them an erotic video. Even women who said they weren't aroused at all were in fact physically turned on, leading scientists to believe the real issue isn't below the waist but above the neck.

GET OUT OF YOUR HEAD

The problem, Brotto says, is that if we're thinking about other things (*Can he see my cellulite? Did I turn off the coffeepot?*), we don't react to the subtle messages our body sends to show it's turned on—namely, the rush of blood to our genitals, the increased lubrication and heightened sensitivity. When we neglect to notice and enjoy the good feelings that sexual contact can produce, the brain doesn't release pleasure-related neurotransmitters such as oxytocin, which make us feel relaxed and connected to others and are triggered by cuddling and orgasm. "Oxytocin is a huge player in sexuality for women, because it makes you want to get close to your partner, and that's when the clothes start coming off," explains neuropsychologist Rick Hanson, author of *Buddha's Brain*. It's when we get this positive-feedback loop working between the body and the mind, he says, that the brain releases dopamine, which lights up its reward centers and helps us think of sex as something that we want to have again.

A 2009 study that compared the brain activity of women with low and healthy libidos found compelling evidence of the brain-body disconnect: MRIs of participants watching an erotic video showed that while low-libido women tended to judge their emotions, those with healthy libidos simply experienced theirs, says Leah Millheiser, M.D., director of the Female Sexual Medicine Program at Stanford University. In other words: The low-response group was too deep in their heads notice what might be going on elsewhere.

Renowned sex therapist Laura Berman, author of *The Book of Love*, calls the brain "the main sexual organ for women." She says, "You could be having what on another night would be amazing sex, but if your mind is wandering, it doesn't register." Only when we consciously recognize the signs of arousal the body is sending do our brains signal the body to intensify those sensations.

...AND INTO YOUR BED

Brotto believes she has found a solution that can help you get your groove back—and no, it does not require batteries or fuzzy handcuffs. In fact, it's positively chaste: mindfulness. This basic form of Buddhist meditation, which Brotto defines as "nonjudgmental awareness of the present moment," can help you relax and manage stress—and bring you back into your body, too.

Recent MRI research shows that mindfulness can change our brains so we can derail the overthinking that snuffs out sexy feelings: In a 2008 study, researchers at Justus Liebig University in Germany found that mindful meditation not only changes the brain (making it denser in the areas that moderate fearful emotions), but it also reduces stress, depression, and possibly chronic pain—all major players in overall health as well as libido.

Brotto stumbled on the link between mindfulness and desire almost by accident. After earning her doctorate, she worked with two very different populations: people with borderline personality disorder and women with gynecologic cancer who also experienced a loss of libido. Her patients with personality issues exhibited a major disconnection from other people and the world around them. Inspired by how powerful mindfulness-based techniques were in helping them overcome destructive behaviors (excessive drinking, suicide attempts), Brotto wondered if mindfulness could also help her low-desire patients, who described their angst with such phrases as "I don't know who I am as a sexual being" or "I feel dead sexually."

"The language these women used reminded me of the disconnection my borderline patients felt about every aspect of their lives," she recalls. So she developed an arsenal of mindfulness-based techniques for her low-desire patients and published peer-reviewed studies that documented their effectiveness in helping women overcome low levels of desire.

Brotto coaches her clients to start practicing mindfulness for 10 minutes a day in a nonsexual

A SENSUAL EDUCATION

Here are a few techniques our experts recommend for honing mindfulness, which can help bridge the gap between mind and body.

TASTE

Tuning in to how your entire body responds to a sensory experience is the first step toward having mindful sex. Start by looking at a single raisin, noticing the texture. Then smell it, observing any changes occurring in your body—such as salivation. Place the raisin on your tongue and notice how it tastes, then slowly chew it before swallowing.

SAVOR

Associating sex with positive emotions is one of the most powerful things we can do to recapture lost desire, Hanson says. To displace negative associations, savor the positive, whether it's physical pleasure or emotional closeness. "Whatever feels good during lovemaking," he says, "focus on it for 20 to 30 seconds, feeling the sensation going into your body like a sponge."

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way—for instance, sitting quietly and focusing on breathing or doing an eating meditation—savoring the flavor and texture of a raisin, for instance—before using mindfulness to amplify physical sensations during sex. "What I hear from my patients is that mindfulness helps them stop worrying and focus instead on their physical sensations—feeling their partner's skin against their own, noticing a change in their breathing—all of which helps them enjoy sex more," Brotto says.

Dianne Sikel, she of the empty sex calendar, had a similar revelation in yoga class. "Savasana was always my favorite part because all I had to do was focus on my breath," she says. So she took this practice off the mat—and onto her mattress. "The next time I was in bed with my husband, I zoned in on how he was kissing me, and how good it felt," she says.

Berman, who has used mindfulness techniques with hundreds of low-desire women, introduces it by teaching them to tap into their senses with simple exercises that set the stage for sexiness. She often starts by having women focus on eating an orange, taking 20 minutes to enjoy its scent, appearance, and taste, slice by slice. "I also counsel them to bring mindfulness into their daily lives," she says, whether feeling it's the sun on their skin or the wind on their face.

But mindful meditation won't turn you into a seductress overnight. You may still have to talk yourself into having sex instead of wanting to rip your partner's clothes off: A mindful sex practice is still a practice. People don't wake up and say, "I can't wait to meditate." They schedule it, and they make a point to show up. "As you become more aware of your body over time, you strengthen the neural pathways that associate sex and fun in your mind and make you much more likely to look forward to future encounters," says Sylvia Rosenfeld, a sex and relationship therapist in New York City.

It took Sikel about six months of practice before her desire resurfaced, along with some fringe benefits. "As I enjoyed sex more, I perked up in other ways—I stopped wearing frumpy sweats and raggedy underwear and started dressing nicer," she says. She also credits mindfulness with strengthening her bond with her husband, who "gets a lot of pleasure out of *my* increased pleasure." Sex is much more gratifying now, and the proof is on her calendar: "There are a lot more circled S's."

MINDFULNESS HELPS WOMEN STOP WORRYING AND FOCUS INSTEAD ON THEIR PHYSICAL SENSATIONS

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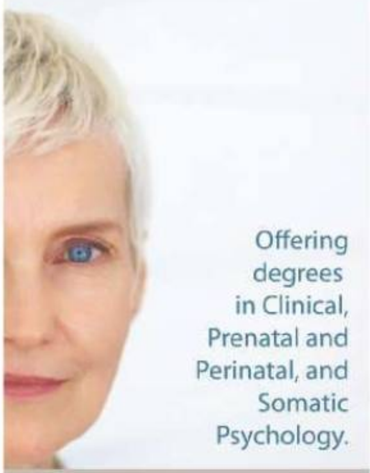

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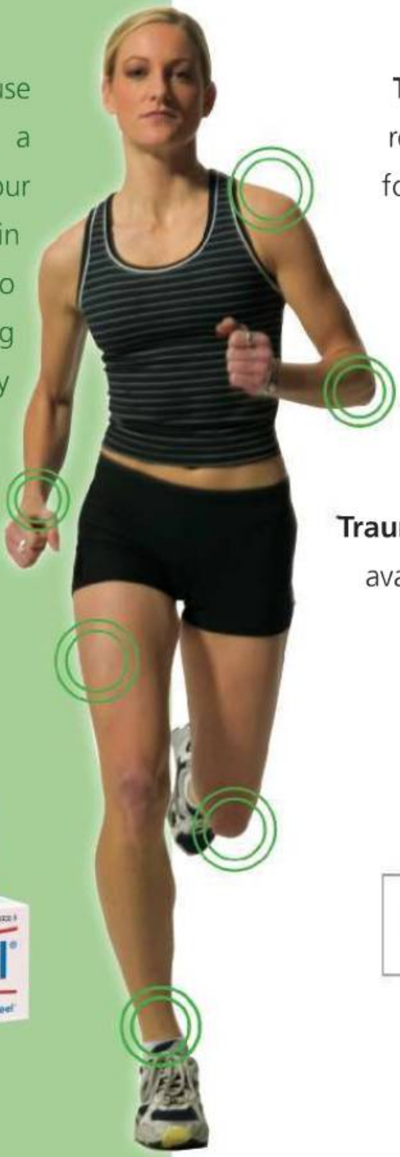

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pop a poem

from "body and soul"

They grow up together
but they aren't even fraternal

twins, they quarrel a lot
about where to go and what

to do, the body complains
about having to carry

the soul everywhere as if
it were some helpless cripple,

and the soul snipes that it can go
places the body never dreamed of,

then they quarrel over which one of them
does the dreaming, but the truth is,

they can't live without each other and
they both know it ...

—SHARON BRYAN

"Body and Soul" from *Sharp Stars* (New York: BOA Editions, Ltd., 2009). Copyright © 2009 by Sharon Bryan. Reprinted with the permission of the author. Photograph by Maria Robledo, hair and makeup by Koji Higashino, styling by Michelle Wong

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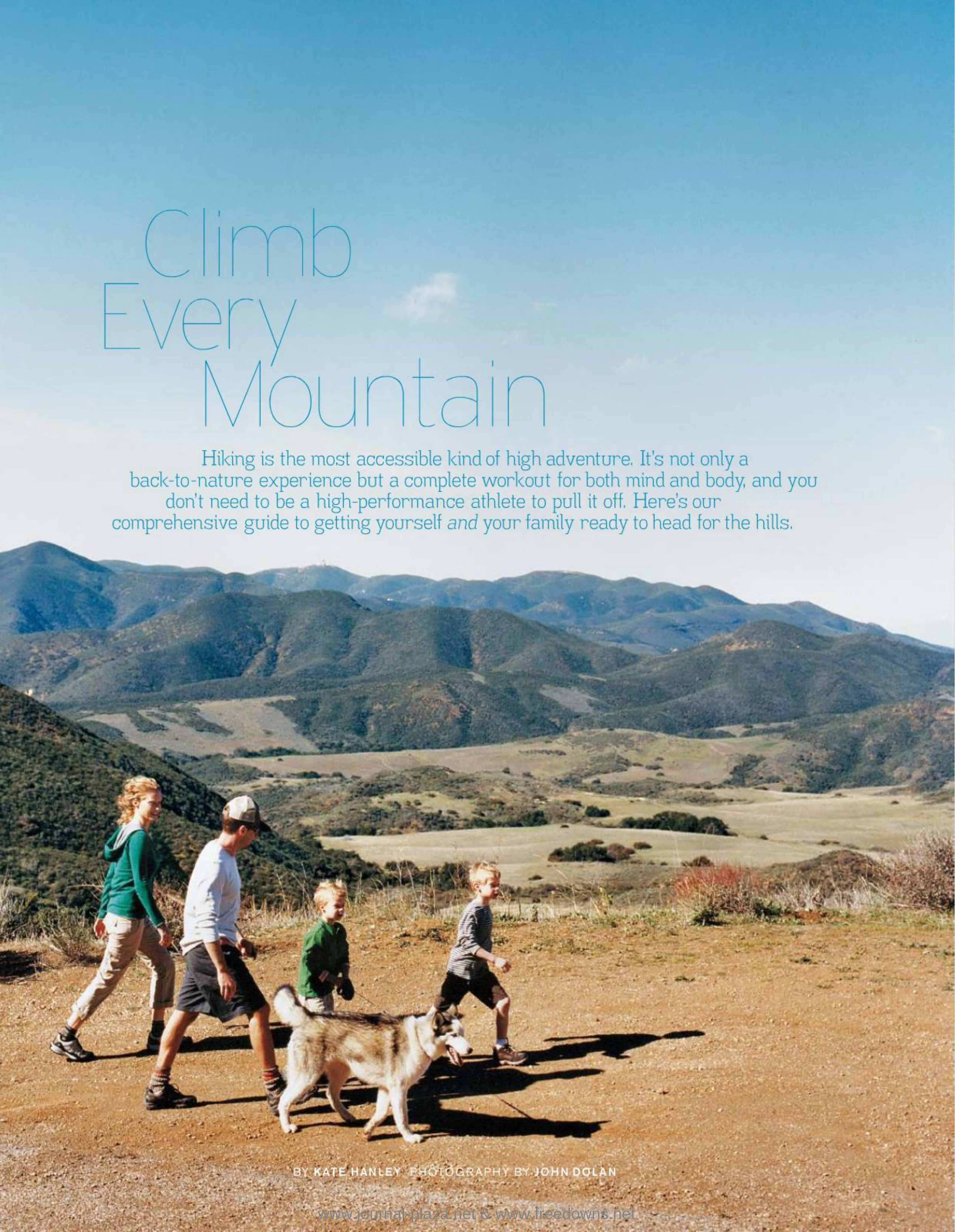
Climb Every Mountain

Hiking is the most accessible kind of high adventure. It's not only a back-to-nature experience but a complete workout for both mind and body, and you don't need to be a high-performance athlete to pull it off. Here's our comprehensive guide to getting yourself *and* your family ready to head for the hills.



BY **KATE HANLEY** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JOHN DOLAN**

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When Nanette Bercu, 38, creative director at Paul Mitchell, and her husband, Dan, pile their sons Odin, 8, and Hunter, 6, into the car for their weekly hike in the Santa Monica Mountains, they're sometimes met with groans. "But an hour into the hike, the kids are totally engrossed," she says. "By the time we're done, we're all a little more alive than when we started."

This most basic form of outdoor recreation is equal parts workout and therapy: It boosts cardiovascular health, strengthens muscles, and clears the head. What the gym and its calibrated machinery can't promise—inspiring views and unpredictable physical challenges—hiking has in spades. "The human body evolved to move over uneven terrain. Doing so keeps our muscles strong and our joints fluid," says Jonathan FitzGordon, creator of the FitzGordon Method, a program in Brooklyn, New York, that teaches natural alignment and pain-free walking.

On the soul-clearing end of things, being out in nature is its own reward. "You start to notice everything and feel present in a very tangible way," Bercu says.

To really reap the full-body benefits of hiking, it helps to do a little prep. The following is all you need to push yourself to new heights.

UPS AND DOWNS

Going uphill works your quads and glutes; going downhill challenges the muscles of your legs, knees, and ankles. Some strategies for maintaining stability and avoiding injury:

GOING UP

SET A REALISTIC PACE "The biggest mistake hikers make is pushing themselves too hard, too fast," says expert hiker Karen Berger, author of *Backpacking and Hiking*.

LEAD WITH YOUR UPPER BODY Lean forward toward the hill and keep your shoulders directly over your leading foot, Dreyer says. Straightening your rear leg is easier than trying to pull yourself uphill by your hamstrings.

TAKE SHORT STRIDES Big steps strain the quads and hamstrings. "Never step past your hip," Dreyer says. "It will overwork your hamstrings and wear you out quickly."

COMING DOWN

THINK VERTICAL Walk with your head, shoulders, hips, knees, and ankles stacked on top of one another.

HEAD STRAIGHT DOWN While zigzagging down a trail is a good idea for extremely steep terrain, it's best to point your feet directly downhill, Dreyer says. "Go easy on your legs by shortening your stride and picking up your feet quickly, as if you were walking on hot coals," he says. "This lowers the impact."

SOFTEN THE KNEES Don't lock your knees coming down; it puts a tremendous strain on them as well as on your lower back.

A MONTH BEFORE HIKING SEASON...

To be trail-ready, you need to improve your aerobic capacity so that you can get enough oxygen to your muscles, says Danny Dreyer, founder of ChiRunning and ChiWalking in Asheville, North Carolina, whole-body fitness programs that combine physics with tai chi.

Try this Walk at a medium-high pace for 30 minutes twice a week. To gauge your intensity, count your strides for 15 seconds and multiply by four. (You want to reach between 65 to 75 strides per minute.) To train for hills, increase the incline of your treadmill. Start at a 3 percent grade, Dreyer says, and increase by 1 percent each week until you get it to 10. This acclimates your legs to walking in shorter, uphill strides. Add the stair climber to your cardio mix at the gym, and take the stairs whenever possible.

DAY OF THE HIKE...

Warm up first with a few minutes of walking, then do a few simple stretches to prime yourself.

Stretch

BELT STRETCH
Opens the chest, shoulders, and upper back. Holding a belt with your hands wide apart, inhale and reach your arms over your head and behind. Repeat 8 to 10 times.

Reach

SIDE STRETCH
Promotes deeper breathing and core strength. Reach both arms up and lift your rib cage away from your pelvis. Hold for 5 to 8 breaths.

Squat

STANDING PIGEON
Strengthens ankles and knees, opens hips. Cross your right ankle over your left knee and bend the knee deeply, as if sitting in a chair. Hold for 5 to 8 breaths.

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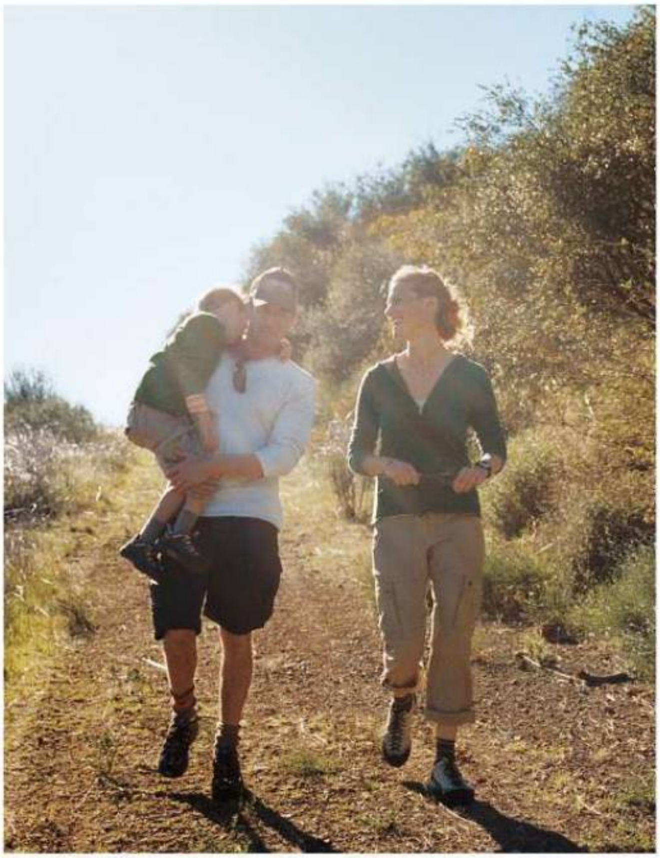
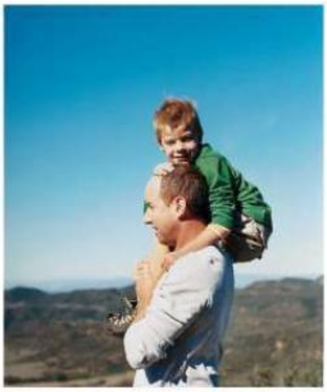
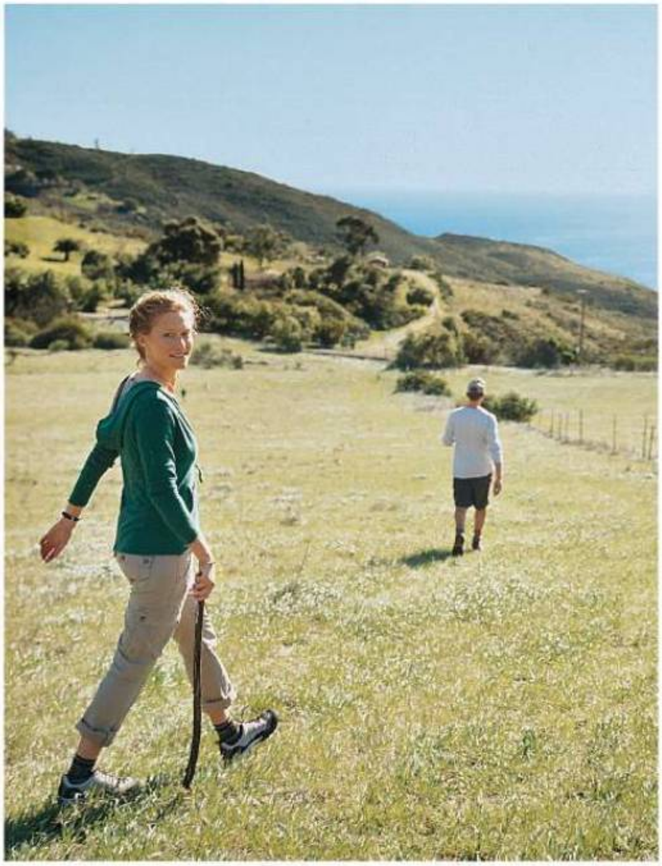


FOOTLOOSE
For Bercu, here with Dan, Odin, and Hunter, fighting the urge to control (or nag) her kids is key to a great hike. "I like to play alongside them when we're hiking," she says. "Aside from looking out for their safety, I try to just let them be free."



POOCH RULES
Dogs reap the rewards of hiking, too, says Linda Mullally, author of *Hiking with Dogs.* Just be sure to observe proper canine etiquette on the trail: Check the park rules before the hike, keep a leash handy, and scoop your poop, as pet waste can contaminate other elements in the environment. Also, bring extra water and a travel bowl—and never let Fido drink from standing water.



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Trail Guide

A few simple rules of thumb to keep in mind before you hit the path.

1

Dress right Opt for trail shoes or hiking boots, quick-drying clothes, a windbreaker, and moisture-wicking wool or wool-blend socks (which stay drier than cotton). And dress in layers.

2

TRY HIKING STICKS THESE POLES STEADY YOU OVER UNEVEN TERRAIN, BOOST THE AEROBIC ASPECT OF YOUR HIKE SO YOU BURN MORE CALORIES, AND EVEN RELIEVE SOME PRESSURE IN YOUR KNEES AND BACK.

3

Rest Don't be too proud to take a break whenever you need one. "A good guideline is one 10-minute break for every hour of your hike," Berger says. If you're going uphill, you may need more frequent, shorter breaks.

4

PACK SNACKS THINK PORTABLE, ENERGY-DENSE FOODS: DRIED FRUITS AND NUTS, GRANOLA BARS, FRESH FRUIT, ENERGY BARS, OR—FOR A SWEET REWARD AT THE TOP—CHOCOLATE.

5

Estimate how far you can go Or rather, don't overestimate (a common error). Assume you'll travel 2 miles an hour—more slowly (½ to 1 mile an hour) if you're out of shape, covering steep terrain, or hiking with kids. Plan on going more quickly (up to 3 miles an hour) if you're very fit.

6

FOCUS BY TUNING IN TO YOUR BODY AS YOU HIKE, YOU GIVE YOUR BRAIN A REST. TURN YOUR ATTENTION TO YOUR FEET ON THE EARTH OR TO YOUR BREATH AS YOU WALK.

SUIT UP

We surveyed the terrain and found the very best hiking helpers to keep you going strong.

Clothes

1
2
3
4
5
6

Gear

7
8
9
10
11

1 SAHARA CADET CAPE HAT BY REI Keeps the sun off your face *and* neck. $27; *rei.com*

2 WOMEN'S LIGHT HIKING SOCKS BY TEKOMERINO Help you stay cool and odor-free. $19; *tekosocks.com*

3 MIDWEIGHT MTS LONG-SLEEVE ZIP T-NECK BY REI Lightweight and great for layering. $35; *rei.com*

4 PARAMOUNT PEAK CONVERTIBLE PANT BY THE NORTH FACE Two zips and you've got shorts. $65; *thenorthface.com*

5 SILVER RIDGE KNIT SHORT-SLEEVE TOP BY COLUMBIA Wicks sweat and provides UPF 15 protection. $30; *columbia.com*

6 VIPER LOW BY TECNICA The low-cut and lightweight shoes prevent irritation. $110; *tecnicausa.com* for stores

7 WOMEN'S EDITION OUTDOOR KIT BY ADVENTURE MEDICAL KITS The next best thing to an EMT. $40; *adventuremedicalkits.com*

8 FRUITION AND SWEET & SAVORY BARS BY PROBAR Tasty trailside treats made from whole foods. $2.30 and $3.30; *theprobar.com*

9 STRATOS 24 PACK BY OSPREY Roomy and light, with two side pockets for easy access to snacks. $99; *ospreypacks.com*

10 ALPINE CARBON CORK BY BLACK DIAMOND Light and compact poles that help you find your stride. $140; *blackdiamondequipment.com*

11 CLASSIC WATER BOTTLE WITH SPORT CAP 2.0 BY KLEAN KANTEEN 27-oz. stainless steel bottle. $20; *kleankanteen.com*

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For hikes with gorgeous scenery and killer views, go to **wholeliving.com/best-hikes**

wardrobe styling by Albert Mendonca, celestineagency.com; hair and makeup by Dale Johnson; produced by Elizabeth Durels; photographs by Raymond Hom; styling by Craig Irwin

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Hiking with Kids

Reality-based tips for winning their cooperation.

Get them excited
Show your kids a map of the trail and talk about the plants and animals you might see.

Pace yourself
How far you should be able to go, based on kids' ages:

0–1 year As far as you can handle while carrying your child in a pack.
1–3 years 1 mile, with lots (and lots) of breaks.
3–5 years No more than 2 miles.
6 years+ 2 to 6 miles, depending on the steepness of the terrain and your child's enthusiasm.

Bribe if you have to
Use food to lure everybody from one milestone to the next. "The harder the hike, the better the snacks [should be]," Bercu says. Her kids' fave: madeleine cookies.

Play games
Inspire the crew with fun competitions, such as who can find the biggest boulder or the most acorns.

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IN THE BUFF

As you read this, your body's busy making new skin: "It takes a skin cell 28 days to move from the dermis, where it's created, to the top layers of skin, where it's naturally sloughed off," says Francesca Fusco, M.D., a Manhattan dermatologist. Spring is the perfect time to help that process along: Post-winter skin is usually dry and scaly after months of low humidity and those overheated homes and offices. Exfoliation kick-starts your skin's renewal system, removing dead cells and uncovering the fresher skin that's waiting underneath. So buff, scrub, and peel your way to a smoother summer with the season's best remedies, both handmade and high-tech.

BY **OLESSA PINDAK** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **RAYMOND HOM**

prop styling by Julie Ho, photograph opposite page by John Dolan, hair and makeup by Dale Johnson, wardrobe styling by Zoe Glassner, produced by Elizabeth Durels; model is wearing L*SPACE brown wrap bikini top.

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For the Face

There are two kinds of exfoliators: physical ones (oats, crystals), which remove dead skin by literally scrubbing it away, and chemical types (glycolic, fruit acids), which dissolve the bonds that hold skin cells together, allowing them to slough off more easily.

TIP

LIMIT EXFOLIATION TO ONCE A WEEK UNTIL YOU KNOW HOW YOUR SKIN REACTS. THEN, YOU CAN SCRUB UP TO THREE TIMES IF YOUR SKIN ISN'T SHOWING SIGNS OF IRRITATION.

BUY IT

1 Olay Regenerist Daily Regenerating Cleanser is a creamy, moisturizing formula with amino peptides that help cells rejuvenate more speedily. $7; *walgreens.com*

2 L'Oréal Paris Go 360° Clean Deep Exfoliating Scrub has natural apricot-seed powder that gently scrubs away dirt; the included scrublet deep-cleans pores. $7; *lorealparis.com*

3 Origins Brighter By Nature High-Potency Brightening Peel with Fruit Acids smoothes skin like a professional glycolic peel (without the redness). $38; *origins.com*

4 Burt's Bees Citrus Facial Scrub, made from ground almonds and oats, is gentle enough for every skin type. $8; *burtsbees.com*

5 Derma E Microdermabrasion Scrub helps to rejuvenate your face, removing dead skin cells gently with a crystal-blend system. $33; *dermae.com*

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TIP

WHEN MAKING AT-HOME TREATMENTS, SERVE YOUR SKIN ORGANIC INGREDIENTS.

DIY IT

OATMEAL LAVENDER FACE SCRUB >

1 c. ground oatmeal

½ c. dry lavender flowers, stripped off stalks

½ c. powdered milk (either whole or nonfat)

2 tsp. cornmeal

Mix all the dry ingredients in a bowl, massage into damp skin, and rinse with warm water. (Scrub will keep for six months.) Recipe from *Do It Gorgeously* (June, 2010), by Sophie Uliano.

PINEAPPLE FACE SCRUB >

⅔ c. fresh pineapple chunks (room temperature)

¼ c. cold-pressed olive oil

¼ c. fresh, clean parsley, chopped

Pulse pineapple in a blender, then add oil until almost smooth. Add parsley, and blend carefully so mask doesn't liquefy. Apply to skin and leave on for 15 minutes, instructs Brenda Brock, recipe creator and founder and CEO of Farmaesthetics.

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For the Body

You can exfoliate your body more regularly than your face; most people can tolerate a daily scrub. Rough spots like heels may crack if dead skin isn't buffed away.

TIP

ALWAYS APPLY A MOISTURIZER AFTER EXFOLIATING TO KEEP FRESHLY SCRUBBED SKIN SOFT.

BUY IT

1 **AHAVA Gentle Body Exfoliator is naturally rich in sea and mud minerals, and penetrates deep to remove impurities. $20;** ***ahava.com***

2 **Aubrey Organics Meal & Herbs Exfoliating Bath Bar contains almond meal and kaolin clay to moisturize and restore your skin's natural balance. $6;** ***wholefoods.com***

3 **J.R. Watkins Smoothing Foot Scrub is infused with pure peppermint oil to help revive tired, dry feet. $10;** ***jrwatkins.com***

4 **Ole Henriksen Rub n' Buff Salt Scrub helps to smooth skin and relieve muscle tension with a blend of sea salts and essential oils. $48;** ***olehenriksen.com***

5 **Sally Hansen Salon Ultra Smoothing Foot Scrub contains Dead Sea salt and marine botanicals to polish away dry skin and calluses. $8;** ***cvs.com***

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DIY IT

SPICY SUGAR SCRUB >

¾ c. sugar

2 tsp. ground cloves

1 Tbsp. dried rose petals

2 tsp. grated orange zest

1½ c. sesame oil

Combine ingredients in a large bowl, making sure that everything is well mixed. Use on damp skin twice a week, Uliano says. The mix will last up to six months when stored in a cool, dark cupboard.

COFFEE ZEST BODY SCRUB ∨

½ c. used coffee grounds

½ c. honey

1 Tbsp. fresh orange zest

Mix ingredients together in a container and gently rub mixture into skin, using upward strokes, for one to three minutes. Apply up to three times a week, Brock says.

TIP

SCRUB WITH YOUR HANDS OR A WASHCLOTH, USING SMALL, CIRCULAR MOTIONS.

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START WITH

PRISTINE GREENS

ADD IN

LOTS OF COLORS

DON'T FORGET

LEAN PROTEIN

FOLLOWED BY

A DASH OF THE UNEXPECTED

TOP WITH

THE RIGHT DRESSING

AND YOU GET

HEALTHY SALADS

THE MAKE-YOUR-OWN SALAD BAR offers so many choices—and so many chances to blow it: The olives that seemed like such a good idea inevitably clash with the candied walnuts recklessly thrown in for "protein," and none of it seems to go with the gloppy dressing on top—the one that probably has as much fat as the burger at the next counter. Well, consider yourself enlightened: We've put together this primer full of can't-fail combinations that are as healthy as they are delicious.

RECIPES BY **SHIRA BOCAR** PHOTOGRAPHS BY **JOHNNY MILLER**

food styling by Shira Bocar, prop styling by Michelle Wong

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THE WALDORF, REVISITED

BIBB LETTUCE / APPLE, CELERY / GRILLED CHICKEN / ALMONDS / CREAMY BUTTERMILK DRESSING

You can make your own delicious dressing with low-fat buttermilk, or lighten the richer salad-bar version by adding a dash of lemon juice or vinegar.

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THINK OUTSIDE THE BAR
FOR AN EASY, HEALTHY DRESSING, GRAB A LEMON FROM THE BEVERAGE AREA AND MUSTARD FROM THE SANDWICH COUNTER. BLEND. ENJOY!

A SMARTER CAESAR

ROMAINE HEARTS / SARDINES, HARD-BOILED EGG / PARMESAN, CROUTONS / OLIVE OIL WITH LEMON

We suggest you BYOS: Bring your own sardines. Or anchovies. Or canned salmon. Some tinned fish are a healthy treasure—low in mercury and full of protein—and they're a cinch to tote to work. Stash a can (or two) in your desk drawer.

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UPGRADED ASIAN

MESCLUN, CILANTRO / CARROTS, RADISHES, MUSHROOMS, AVOCADO / TOFU / ASIAN DRESSING V

Tofu can be magically versatile—or woefully bland. To make the most of its taste-absorbing talents, put it on the plate first, drizzle it with dressing, then add your other ingredients. Mix right before eating.

V **Vegetarian** no meat products
V **Vegan** no animal derivatives
S **Special diet** no dairy, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, eggs, peanuts, or tree nuts

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GOOD GREEK!

ROMAINE / RED ONION, PEPPERONCINIS, CUCUMBER / CHICKPEAS / FETA, TORN PITA / VINAIGRETTE V

When choosing a cheese, remember that bold, assertive flavors such as feta or blue, pack a lot of punch—so use them sparingly. Your salad's chief protein source should be lean meat or beans, like chickpeas. Think of the cheese as a little something extra.

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LIGHTEN UP!
HEAVY DRESSINGS, LIKE BLUE CHEESE OR RUSSIAN, WILL KILL TENDER LETTUCES LIKE ARUGULA OR SPINACH. TO SAVE THE DELICATE LEAVES FROM DROWNING, USE A VINAIGRETTE.

A NEW NIÇOISE

ARUGULA, SPINACH / BASIL, CHERRY TOMATOES, GREEN BEANS, BELL PEPPER / TUNA / OLIVES / VINAIGRETTE

In this classic French dish, components are typically kept separate, not tossed together. But you can still mix it up with delicate ingredients. Simply put bulkier items at the bottom of your bowl, and layer lighter ones on top.

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TOUCH OF GREEN

NOT ALL SALADS NEED TO BE ANCHORED BY LETTUCE; FOR A CHANGE OF PACE, TRY AN HERB. BASIL AND TOMATOES ARE A CLASSIC COMBO; SO ARE CILANTRO AND CORN.

BETTER BEETS

BABY SPINACH OR WHOLE PARSLEY LEAVES / BEETS, SLICED CELERY / LENTILS / BLUE CHEESE, WALNUTS / VINAIGRETTE V

Sweet, meaty beets would overpower most light, raw vegetables, but celery, lentils, and blue cheese are up to the challenge. Nuts are also welcome: Just about any kind will work, from walnuts to toasted pecans and hazelnuts.

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A SMARTER SALAD

"Salads can be your best friend or your greatest enemy," says Keri Glassman, R.D., nutritionist, and author of *The O2 Diet*. "But if you use them to your advantage, you will stockpile loads of nutrients to fight disease, ward off pounds, and up your immunity—and your energy."

START WITH HEALTHY GREENS

We've all heard that the deeper the green, the denser the nutrients, and indeed Glassman says leafy greens like spinach and kale are nutritional "all-stars," thanks to their abundant fiber, folate, and carotenoids. But romaine eaters also have reason to rejoice; Glassman praises the crisp lettuce for its plentiful stores of vitamins A and C.

EAT YOUR COLORS

Red One cup of red bell pepper can have more than 150 percent of the RDA for vitamin C; tomatoes are flush with lycopene, which is not only a powerful antioxidant but also heart-healthy.

Orange/Yellow Carrots and sweet potatoes have vision-enhancing beta-carotene, points out Glassman; papayas, with vitamins C and E, may help stave off sun damage.

Green Monosaturated fats are one reason Glassman loves avocados; the anti-aging potential of carotenoids is another. Broccoli is also a favorite for its immune-boosting properties.

Blue/Purple Blueberries contain pectin, which helps keep you regular, and anthocyanins, which can boost cognitive abilities; plums contain chlorogenic acid, which may decrease anxiety and depression.

White "White foods are great, too," says Glassman. Cauliflower and onions contain antioxidants; mushrooms are the sole produce with natural vitamin D.

B+S ONLINE To find complete nutritional information for these recipes and more healthy salad ideas, go to **wholeliving.com/salad-recipes**

FORTIFY WITH A LEAN PROTEIN

Protein plays an important role in turning a salad from a side dish into the star attraction. For those looking to lose weight, Glassman suggests beans; they're loaded with fiber, which keeps you feeling full, and lean protein, which helps regenerate muscle. Fatty fish, such as sardines or salmon, are another good choice. They may prevent weight gain, Glassman says, based on recent studies that suggest omega-3s help burn calories and create a sense of satiety. Then there's chicken and, yes, lean beef, both of which contain coenzyme Q10, an antioxidant that aids in cell renewal.

ADD THE FINAL TOUCH

Glassman recommends keeping the following items stashed away for a last-minute healthy salad addition: wheat germ, ground flaxseed, and gomasio, a Japanese condiment made of sesame seeds and sea salt.

TOP IT OFF

Don't ruin your creation by drowning it in dressing, especially the fat, sodium, and preservative-laden versions found on most salad bars. For the healthiest option, pack your own.

ASIAN DRESSING

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- **¼ c. rice vinegar**
- **1½ tsp. soy sauce, or more to taste**
- **½ tsp. Dijon mustard**
- **1 tsp. minced garlic**
- **1 tsp. grated ginger**
- **Pinch red pepper flakes**
- **⅓ c. vegetable oil**

In a small bowl, whisk together vinegar, soy sauce, mustard, garlic, ginger, and pepper flakes. Add oil in a slow, steady stream until emulsified. Refrigerate for up to 1 week.

41 calories; 5 g fat

CLASSIC VINAIGRETTE

MAKES 1 CUP

- **¼ c. white wine vinegar**
- **2 tsp. Dijon mustard**
- **1 Tbsp. minced shallots**
- **¾ c. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper**

In a small bowl, whisk together vinegar, mustard, and shallots. Add olive oil in a slow, steady stream until emulsified. Season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate for up to 1 week.

91 calories; 10 g fat

CREAMY BUTTERMILK DRESSING

MAKES 1¼ CUPS

- **¾ c. low-fat buttermilk**
- **¼ c. soybean oil mayonnaise**
- **1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice**
- **1 Tbsp. minced chives**
- **1 Tbsp. chopped parsley**
- **Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper**

Whisk ingredients together in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate for up to 3 days.

24 calories; 2 g fat

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balanced WEIGHT LOSS

Scientists are discovering there's a hidden key to shedding pounds, and it's got little to do with calories or willpower. Meet your hormones—and the surprising effect they have on weight.

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Say you eat a doughnut. The doughnut you deserve because it's a hellish day, and carbs are what will make this week—the one before your period—worth living through. O, the bliss when that powdered sugar hits your system! Until, inevitably, you crash, which leaves you exhausted and depressed ... and sniffing around for another doughnut.

Because a doughnut is never just a doughnut. It's a Molotov cocktail that you're lobbing into your hormonal ecosystem.

Hormones are the chief executives of the body, governing everything: our sex lives, our stress lives, our immune response. Research has implicated hormonal imbalance in everything from breast cancer to short-term memory loss—as well as what we eat, why we eat it, and what happens to the body once the food is down our throats. Which means that when you picked up that doughnut, you weren't just having a weak-willed moment. You were obeying your team of internal managers.

"There are at least 40 chemicals in our bodies that influence our appetite and what we eat," says Robert Greene, M.D., medical director of the Sher Institute for Reproductive Medicine in Sacramento and the author of several books on optimizing hormones, most recently *Perfect Hormone Balance for Fertility.* "The good news is that we're developing strategies to shift hormone signals to help people avoid weight gain as well as lose weight."

IT STARTS WITH GOOD BALANCE

Three recent books claim that stabilizing our hormone levels is at least as important—if not more so—as the old equation of calories in, calories out. In *The Perfect 10 Diet*, Michael Aziz, M.D., founder and director of Midtown Integrative Medicine in New York City, claims any diet will fail unless it steadies the body's level of insulin. "I know it sounds counterintuitive, but calorie counting is not everything," Aziz says. "When insulin is secreted in higher amounts, you feel hungrier and you eat more. Willpower does not exist when insulin is high."

Neuroscientist Daniel Amen's diet plan in *Change Your Brain, Change Your Body* recommends optimizing hormone levels through daily interval training, balancing insulin, sleeping well, and lowering stress. "For your brain to be right, your hormone levels have to be healthy," Amen says. "The neurotransmitter serotonin, which affects mood and appetite, needs proper estrogen levels to be optimal. Low testosterone has been associated with a worsening of memory and mood, and more fat on your belly." Meanwhile, naturopathic doctors Jade and Keoni Teta, in their book, *The New ME Diet,* go so far as to contend that we all have individual metabolic profiles (predisposed to burn sugar, muscle, or a mix of sugar and fat), and that eating for our type will unlock our fat-burning hormones. Despite this high-concept theory, however, they prescribe—like the other authors—an insulin-controlling plan that emphasizes protein and fiber and restricts carbs—a basic recipe for endocrine balance.

THE HORMONE/WEIGHT LINK

A complex concoction of some 200 hormones circulates in the bloodstream at any given time, Greene asserts; each can signal different things to different parts of the body. The most influential for weight loss are the thyroid hormone, which helps regulate metabolism, and insulin, which allocates sugar in the bloodstream. (The doughnut prompted insulin to flood your system, directing glucose to your muscles and liver and converting excess sugar into fat. The resulting plunge in glucose led to the "sugar crash.") Other hormones that may send you to the refrigerator:

CORTISOL This well-known fight-or-flight hormone, which drives our natural stress response, increases glucose in the blood so we have the energy to hightail it from dangerous situations ... or deal with crazy-making jobs. But according to studies, excess cortisol leads to a heightened appetite and cravings for sugar and simple carbs, as well as increased belly fat—which is linked to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and other health problems. (Drugstores are crammed with "cortisol blockers," but there's no clinical evidence these pills will have any mitigating effect.)

BY AMY MACLIN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARIA ROBLEDO

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"We know cortisol results in greater food intake, particularly rewarding 'comfort food' that's high in fat and sugar," says Elissa Epel, Ph.D., associate professor in the department of psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco, who has studied the cortisol/appetite link. "It may be evolutionarily that during times of stress, it benefits our survival to seek food with the most calories."

A 2004 study at the New York Obesity Research Center compared overweight women who were binge eaters with those who weren't; after a stress test in which subjects submerged their hands in freezing water, the binge eaters had higher levels of cortisol. Marci Gluck, Ph.D., one of the study's authors and a research clinical psychologist at the National Institutes of Health, agrees there's a link between cortisol, hunger, food intake, and obesity, though she admits, "What that link is, and how we might treat it, is still undefined." One thing we do know is that cortisol is regulated by sleep; several studies have shown that even partial sleep deprivation can elevate levels.

LEPTIN AND GHRELIN Leptin (from the Greek word *leptos*, or thin) signals us to stop eating if we're full. Its partner in crime, ghrelin—the only hunger hormone identified to date—counteracts leptin and other hormones and tells the body it's time to be fed.

Unfortunately, we can't count on these hormones to switch off when we've gotten what we biologically need from our food: Recent research suggests that these hormones of fullness and hunger play a role not just in our "homeostatic" feeding (for energy—that is, eating to live) but in "hedonic" feeding (for pleasure—that is, living to eat). A 2009 study at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center suggests ghrelin might make some people keep eating enjoyable foods even after they're full: Mice who received ghrelin continued to push buttons with their noses to get pellets of high-fat chow long after those who hadn't received the hormone gave up.

"Human behavior, especially related to appetite and eating, is very complex," says Jeffrey Zigman, M.D., one of the researchers. He cites a 2008 study at McGill University in Montreal, in which healthy people were shown pictures of food, then some were given ghrelin. A functional MRI revealed that ghrelin activated areas in the brain involved in reward-seeking behaviors. "What we're now showing in mice probably also happens in humans," he says. Though ghrelin goes up in periods of stress, Zigman adds, nobody knows why yet. (See a pattern here?) Notably, previous studies have demonstrated ghrelin increases throughout the day in people who have lost weight by dieting, which may help explain rebound weight gain.

HAVE YOUR CAKE, AND EAT IT TOO

All right, sometimes you can't resist the siren song of your hormonal cravings. These are the smartest ways to get that sugar hit.

EAT DESSERT RIGHT AFTER A HIGH-FIBER MEAL "The body will absorb the sugar more slowly, which allows the hormones to react more normally," Greene says.

TAKE IT SLOW In a 2010 study on the effects of eating speed, scientists gave subjects identical servings of ice cream on different occasions. At one sitting, they ate the treat in 30 minutes; at the other, they gulped it down in five. Researchers measured the subjects' insulin and gut hormones before, during, and after eating, and found that the slow eaters had higher levels of satiety due to the hormones peptide-1 and peptide YY.

TREAT IT WITH RESPECT "Put it on a plate and savor it," Greene says. "You'll probably eat only half as much." Our brain needs to register those rogue calories in its reward system, which takes much longer when we're guiltily stuffing them down on the sly.

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ESTROGEN AND PROGESTERONE After ovulation, progesterone—the hormone that prepares the body for pregnancy—increases, which may lead you to eat more in anticipation of needing more calories. And theory has it that when the reproductive hormone estrogen plunges in the week before your period, so may your levels of the feel-good neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin, which your body knows will be restored by the carbs in a bowl of mashed potatoes. Deficiencies in estrogen and progesterone may also drive menopausal women to chow down: When researcher Judy Cameron, Ph.D., removed the ovaries of 16 monkeys in a 2003 study at Oregon Health and Science University, she observed a 29 percent jump in food intake and a 3 percent jump in weight in a matter of weeks.

Hormonally challenged women may take perverse relief in the news, Cameron says: "People can say, It's not really my fault." But for our health we still have to do something about the weight gain, she notes ruefully, and recommends exercise as the antidote. (So much for relief.)

Greene's not letting us off the hook either. "Once women pass their childbearing years, it's inevitable that the reproductive hormones fall," he says. "But with weight gain, fat cells expand and release hormones that promote even more fat storage. That vicious cycle makes you fatter and fatter unless you consciously interrupt the pattern."

GETTING THE BEST HORMONAL MIX

Though as yet there is no proven miracle combo of foods or behaviors that will jump-start those internal executors into setting our fat on fire, we *can* give our hormones a better chance by creating a stable environment in which they can work.

EAT WHOLE FOODS Think a diet high in fiber, complex carbs, and low-glycemic-index foods like whole grains and fiber-rich vegetables and fruit, as well as unsaturated fats, which will take longer to metabolize and help you stave off cravings, says Alice Chang, M.D., assistant professor of endocrinology and metabolism in the department of internal medicine at UT Southwestern. Eat foods in their intact form, Greene adds: whole oranges, for instance, instead of juice. "One glass of juice might take three oranges, plus the added sugar," he says, "but if you were eating oranges themselves, you'd probably stop after one-and-a-half." Having five or six small meals of lean protein and complex carbohydrates throughout the day will help keep your blood sugar stable.

MOVE Cameron recommends exercising an hour per day, five days a week, to combat hormonal weight gain. But that doesn't have to mean a solid hour of running: "Park the car at the end of the lot," she says. "Take the stairs." Strength training can also help with hormonal balance, says Brian McFarlin, Ph.D., associate professor of exercise, physiology, nutrition, and immunology at the University of Houston: "It alters the cortisol level, helping you burn calories and fat. Even at rest, muscle burns more calories than other tissue."

CHECK YOUR STRESS For most people, basic stress-relief measures, such as getting a massage or seeing a counselor, "will lead to better hormonal balance," Gluck says. A variety of research shows that people who practice yoga three times a week tend to gain less weight; one study published last year by the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* found that middle-aged people who did yoga gained less weight over a 10-year period than those who didn't.

"WITH WEIGHT GAIN, OUR FAT CELLS EXPAND AND RELEASE HORMONES THAT PROMOTE MORE FAT STORAGE. IT'S A VICIOUS CYCLE."

GET PLENTY OF SLEEP A 2004 study at the University of Wisconsin-Madison revealed that subjects who slept less had lower levels of leptin and higher levels of ghrelin. Other research has shown that just three days of sleep disruption increases insulin resistance in humans.

RAISE THOSE ENDORPHINS "Part of why we eat is to get rid of bad feelings, and pleasures can counteract that," Epel says. Ways to get that natural high? Exercise, of course. Find a hobby that engages you. Listen to music you love, and dance around your living room. Take a class. Eat spicy foods. Do something thrilling. Laugh. Have an orgasm.

Remember, not all cycles have to be vicious. Research shows the more you exercise, the better you sleep, which can make you less hungry. Also, the more you sleep and exercise, the better your mood and stress levels may be, so you're less likely to get the neurochemical cues that might lead you to overeat. And all these steps may lead you toward feeling more whole—an even worthier goal than narrower hips. *(Additional reporting by Michelle Herrera Mulligan and Carlene Bauer)*

wardrobe and prop styling by Michelle Wong, hair and makeup by Koji Higashino

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JEAN THERAPY

We live in denim—and our stories are interwoven with the threads of our favorite pairs. But can a better cut transform our sense of self? Four women show off looks that give them a new shape, and fondly remember jeans from their past.

BY **SARAH ENGLER**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MANUEL RODRIGUEZ**

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"In the '80s, I fell in love with oversize men's 501s and wore them with a belt. I thought they made me look so hip. Though in old photos, I look like I'm on my way to a potato-sack race."

SKINNY JEANS

Lisa Mahar, *44, owner of Kid O toy store in N.Y.C. (with son Eli, 4)*

Wants a cut that makes her narrow, boyish frame look more feminine

TWIGGY LEGGING JEAN BY JAMES JEANS, $115; *anthropologie.com*

also wearing:
Novella cotton voile and lace blouse in gray by Joie, $198; Knit Wit, *215-564-4760.* **Gold rock candy 9-stone bangle** in clear quartz, **gold starlet bangle,** and **gold rock candy gelato abracadabra bangle** in smoky topaz by Ippolita; *ippolita.com for pricing.* **Leather perforated ballet flats** in pewter by Gap, $40; *gap.com.*

On Eli: **Short-sleeve taupe shirt with brown long-sleeve** by Old Navy, $15; *800-653-6289 for stores.*

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BOYFRIEND JEANS

Snow Xia, *22, hedge fund risk analyst*

Wants a cut that is long enough for her 5'11" frame

501 BOYFRIEND JEAN BY LEVI'S, $80; *levi.com*

also wearing:
Rib tank in white by Enza Costa Rogue, $97; Sucre NYC, *212-352-1640*. **14-karat gold crack necklace** by Love Rocks NY, price upon request; *loverocksny.com*. **Chuck Taylor All Star** in black by Converse, $45; *converse.com*.

"My mom bought me the best pair when I was 16 years old. They were perfect—snug yet comfy. I wore them until I walked off the hems, and then I turned them into shorts. They'll always remind me of where I come from."

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"I wore one pair almost every day for two months when I was backpacking through Europe. By the end, they were perfectly broken in and buttery soft. They saw me through six countries and 10 cities. I'll never get rid of them."

STRAIGHT-LEG JEANS

Chana Garcia, *34, editor and blogger*

Wants a cut that creates a slimming silhouette

STRAIGHT DARK WASH JEAN BY BANANA REPUBLIC, $80; *banana republic.com*

also wearing:
Organic cotton voile scoop-neck shirt in India sky by Eileen Fisher, $158; *myshape.com (available May 15).* **Imitation rhodium linear drop earrings** by ABS by Allen Schwartz, $45; *212-689-4409.* **Platform peep-toe pumps** by Nine West, $79; *800-999-1877 for stores.*

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“After I got divorced, I needed a pick-me-up, so I bought a pair that hugged me in all the right spots and made me feel confident and sexy. I've owned them for 10 years. They are like comfort food for my body.”

BOOT-CUT JEANS

Shannon Connell, *39, owner of The Fierce Club yoga studio in N.Y.C.*

Wants a cut that flatters her curves

ORGANIC COTTON QUEEN JEANS BY LINDA LOUDERMILK, $288; *Juno and Jove, 941-953-9500*

also wearing:
Nessa double layered racer-back tank in white by Rock & Republic, $98; *702-770-3465.* **Nude draped vest** by Riller & Fount, $106; *revolveclothing.com.* **Blake 14-karat yellow-gold hoop earrings with white gold chain wrapped** by Paige Novick, price upon request; *paigenovick.com.* **High-heel sandals** by Nine West, $89; *ninewest.com.*

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THE KINDEST CUT

Our favorite options for every silhouette.

SKINNY

Makes short and straight appear longer and curvier, and is easy to dress up with heels or down with flats.

THE DIVA BY OLD NAVY, $30; *oldnavy.com*

(e) LOW SKINNY JEAN 531 BY LEVI'S, $80; *levi.com*

BERLIN IN REVOKE BLUE BY ROCK & REPUBLIC, $345; *rockandrepublic.com*

BOYFRIEND

Slouchy and best worn with a rolled cuff, this style looks great on long legs and paired with sandals or sneakers.

VINTAGE SLIM JEAN IN WORN-IN WASH BY J.CREW, $98; *jcrew.com*

(e) BOYFRIEND JEAN BY AOKI, $218; *404-968-9706*

SLOUCHY CROPPED JEAN BY J BRAND, $158; *jbrandjeans.com*

STRAIGHT

These pants have a uniform width from hip to ankle, creating a slimming effect, especially when worn with heels.

STRAIGHT-LEG JEAN BY UNIQLO, $40; *877-486-4756*

(e) STRAIGHT-LEG JEAN IN ORGANIC STRETCH DENIM BY EILEEN FISHER, $148; *eileenfisher.com*

REAL STRAIGHT JEAN BY GAP, $70; *gap.com*

BOOT CUT

Tighter through the hips and thighs, these balance curves with a little flare at the bottom. Best with a boot or heel.

SLENDER SECRET BOOT-CUT JEANS BY LEE, from $26; *lee.com*

DARK WASH BOOT-CUT JEAN BY BLANK, $68; *866-508-5326*

CHARLIE SLIM BOOT CUT BY ANLO, $194; *shopbop.com*

(e) **Eco-friendly denim,** made from organic cotton

wardrobe styling by Sabine Feuilloley, hair and makeup by Gigi Gommers for Ford, prop styling by Michelle Wong; photographs this page by Raymond Hom

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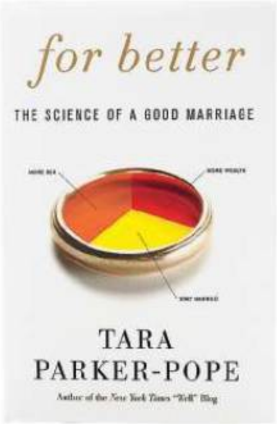
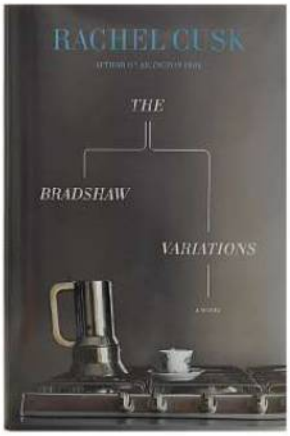
READS THAT FEED

HAPPILY EVER AFTER?

Two books report on the state of the marital union.





Book bag

For Better: The Science of a Good Marriage by Tara Parker-Pope (Dutton)

The Bradshaw Variations by Rachel Cusk (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux)

LATELY, WHEN I SEE MYSELF from a distance, kissing my husband, my son's lunch box in hand, it's as if I've glimpsed two sides of myself in a mirror—one woman is blunted by the pressures of adulthood while still perfunctorily attending to them; the other has risen to the occasion of midlife filled with a knowledge of the fleeting (and therefore more meaningful) nature of existence. Two new books show just these different sides of marriage. *New York Times* reporter Tara Parker-Pope's *For Better: The Science of a Good Marriage* is an optimistic account of current research, while author Rachel Cusk's novel, *The Bradshaw Variations*, offers a more somber look at the ambivalences of modern marriage.

Despite the fact that she was inspired to write her book after her own divorce, Pope argues that "in many ways, the marital bond is stronger and better than it ever has been." Perhaps the most compelling bit of research she offers to back up this sunny premise is that divorce rates have steadily dropped since the 1970s. Among college graduates, she notes, the 10-year divorce rate for people married in the '90s is only 16 percent; it's 23 percent for those who married in the '70s. However, Pope also presents evidence that points to the subtler conflicts of long-term commitment. Couples with children in the '90s and the 2000s, she says, "experienced a drop in marriage satisfaction twice as large as that reported by parents in the 1960s and 1970s." Pope thinks this may be because they have less help from family than in previous generations, and have higher expectations for marriage to begin with. More of us marry for companionship now, and when parenting takes us away from it, we're more sharply disappointed.

Cusk's book is a provocative look at this disillusionment. This is familiar territory for her—her 2001 memoir, *A Life's Work: On Becoming a Mother*, explored domestic life with stark honesty. Here, she examines the marriage of Thomas Bradshaw and his wife, Tonie. Thomas is 41, "the age when a life comes out of its own past like something out of a mold; and either it is solid, all of a piece, or it fails to hold its shape and disintegrates." He has stopped working to play the piano and take care of their daughter; Tonie, recently promoted at her university job, is now the sole breadwinner. By bucking convention, the two are forced to deal with today's dilemma of never quite knowing who wields the power in the family. As a result, they brood quite a bit over where they stand in relationship to each other.

Meanwhile, Thomas's older brother, Howard, and his wife, Claudia, who have three children, have made a fortune off Howard's eccentric business schemes. While these two display a disgruntled affection for each other, they take pleasure in the distracted, rambunctious happiness they've built. (Although Cusk notes that Claudia has "a painting studio at the bottom of the garden, a kind of memorial to her forsaken career.") Interestingly, Cusk seems to support Howard and Claudia, who have taken a more conventional approach to marriage, in the novel's intriguingly punitive conclusion.

In the end, both authors propose how to make a marriage last. Pope gives straightforward advice—marry after 25, she says, make sure your spouse isn't your only friend, and try not to roll your eyes—while Cusk suggests that accepting both difficulties and rewards can lead you into compliant intimacy. Their books impart a similar lesson: Nobody really lives happily ever after, but maybe provocatively challenged is enough. —NELL CASEY

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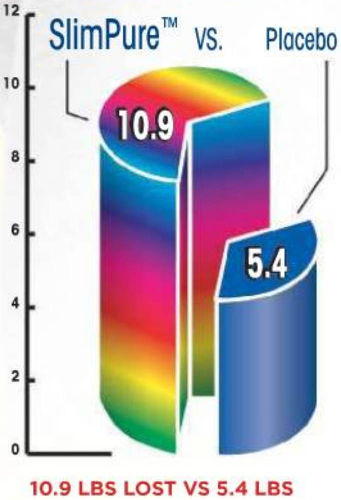

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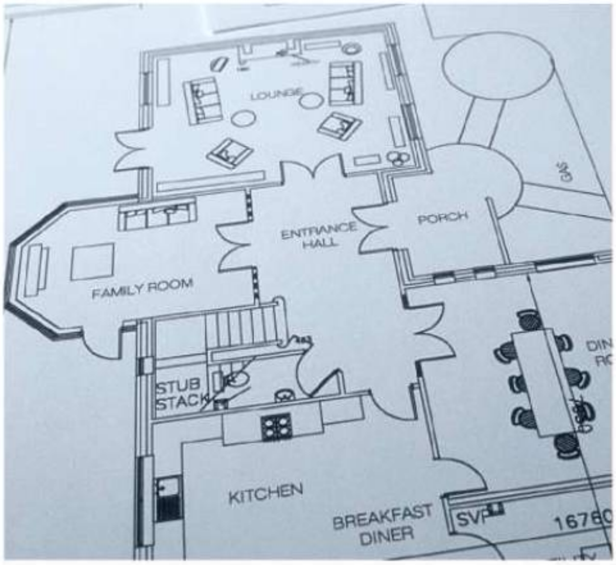

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THE BIG IDEA

ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

Can you houseclean a heart?

There are loads of books about coping with life's biggest issues—divorce, death, financial ruin. This isn't one of them. In *The Nine Rooms of Happiness* (Voice/Hyperion), Lucy Danziger, the editor-in-chief of *Self* magazine, and psychiatrist Catherine Birndorf, M.D., offer a way to address our nagging everyday problems—by asking ourselves what emotional "rooms" we've stashed them in—as well as tips for getting our metaphorical house in order.

B+S: Why focus on the small stuff?

LD: In most women's lives, it's the little things that steal happiness: a fight with the spouse, a friend who hasn't called back. Learning not to let the little things bring you down is a life's work, but there are a few tricks to help you reframe self-defeating habits.

B+S: Tell us the way to do *that*.

LD: According to research, half of our happiness level is determined by set point, 10 percent by circumstances. But 40 percent is up to us. So you can choose to be happier. The next time something is bringing you down, ask yourself how you're participating in that equation.

B+S: Why did you use a house as a metaphor for emotional life?

CB: Each "room" corresponds to a different realm. The living room's for our social life, the bedroom for intimacy, the bathroom for health and vanity. Women go from room to room constantly, but often we're preoccupied by the mess down the hall. Compartmentalizing helps.

B+S: How so?

LD: Unsolved problems in one room can affect another. Maybe you're having the same fight with your spouse about money (the office), and it's affecting your sex life (the bedroom). The real problem may be your different financial philosophies. You may need to go to the basement, where memories are, to see how the past is affecting you today.

B+S: I guess that's always the trouble spot.

CB: It has the biggest footprint. Our past defines us. But you can re-metabolize those memories and see them from a new perspective. Then you have to store them away and come back upstairs.

—TERRI TRESPICIO

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BOOKMARKED

ON THE JOYS OF DINNER FOR ONE

"Take advantage of living alone. Play music in the middle of the night, if that's when you feel like cooking, and crank it up as loud as you want. Who is going to complain? Put on those Bach cello suites and believe that you, too, will once again have a passionate love affair. Load up Al Green and believe in sex after 50. Listen to Alison Krauss tell you about that 'restless feeling knocking at my door today.' Pay attention when Emmylou Harris tells you 'some say love is like smoke beyond repair.' Of course, love is like smoke. That is why you are alone in the kitchen at 2 a.m., is it not? Just try not to burn the muffins."

From Dominique Browning's *Slow Love* (Atlas & Co.), a chronicle of the author's first year after losing her job (as the editor of *House & Garden*), and how she came to embrace "slow living."

photograph by John Kernick

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PERSONAL SOUND TRACK

ALLISON MOORER

The country songbird on what she listens to when she's …

DRIVING *Nebraska,* Bruce Springsteen. It's a perfect backdrop for any long stretch of road.

CLEANING UP AFTER A PARTY Jackson Browne, *The Pretender.* Perfect melancholy—there is so much gravity in it.

SITTING ON HER PORCH *Harvest,* Neil Young. It just sounds like the porch, doesn't it?

FEELING CONTEMPLATIVE *All Things Must Pass,* George Harrison. Oh, George. He might not have had it all figured out, but this record makes it feel like he did.

FEELING BLUE *Sketches of Spain,* Miles Davis. The first notes make me close my eyes, stop what I'm doing, and just feel. A wonderful elixir for what ails you.

WORKING OUT *Is This It,* the Strokes. This record always motivates me to finish that 45 minutes on the cardio machine. Or *Only by the Night,* Kings of Leon.

DOING THE DISHES *Impossible Dream,* Patty Griffin. She is one of the few who could brighten up doing the dishes.

Moorer's new record is *Crows* (Rykodisc).

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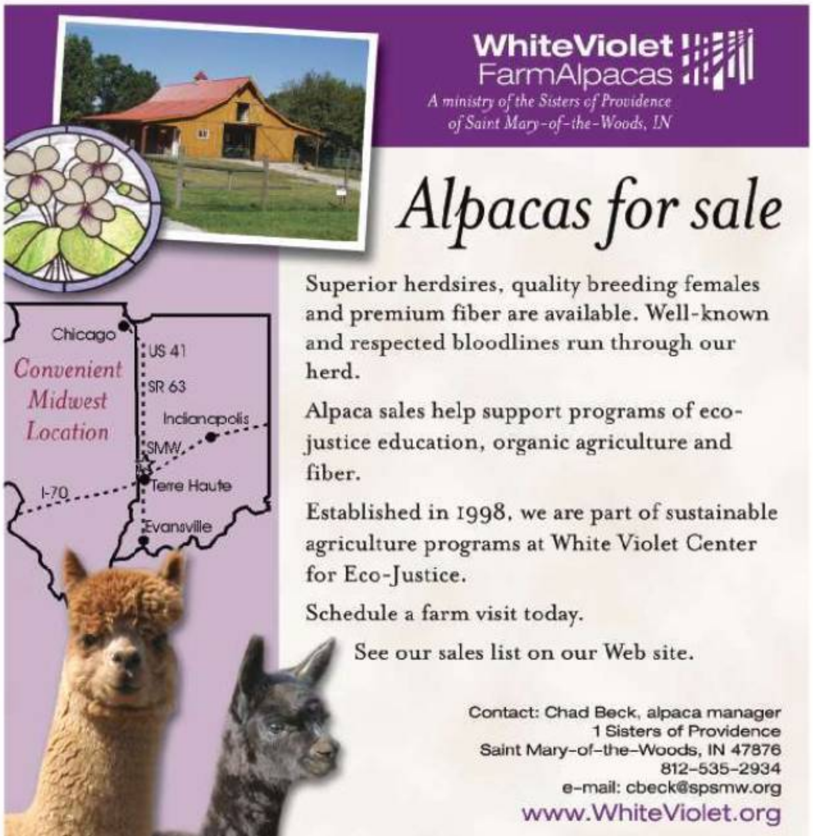

PLAYLIST REFRESHER

Download this if you love ... Leonard Cohen.

> **RUFUS WAINWRIGHT, *ALL DAYS ARE NIGHTS: SONGS FOR LULU*** Much like fellow Canadian Cohen, Wainwright captures sorrow with utter sophistication. This album features more majesty with sparser accompaniment and includes an aria from his own opera, *Prima Donna*.

> **MUMFORD & SONS, *SIGH NO MORE*** On their stunning debut, these Londoners weave together folk and rock with arresting four-part harmonies and varied lyrical inspiration, from heartbreak to *The Grapes of Wrath*.

> **EELS, *END TIMES*** Tagged a "divorce album" by Eel Mark Oliver Everett, these songs reflect the loss of love in lo-fi acoustics and lyrics like "So tell me this can't be how it's gonna end/Tell me my heart somehow dear God it's gonna mend." —LIZA GHORBANI

MOVIE NIGHT

^^ *Mother and Child*

THIS WOMAN'S WORK

Writer-director Rodrigo García might be Hollywood's leading ladies' man. His latest film, *Mother and Child*, which explores the pull of maternal ties, stars Annette Bening as a guarded physical therapist, Naomi Watts as a take-charge attorney, and Kerry Washington as a woman trying to adopt. And it may feature these actresses' finest work. García's dedication to strong distaff casts began with his first movie, *Things You Can Tell Just by Looking at Her* (2000), which stars Glenn Close, Holly Hunter, and Cameron Diaz in five overlapping vignettes about work and love. The director, the son of Gabriel García Márquez, followed that Cannes prizewinner with the innovative *Nine Lives* (2005), shaped as nine chapters in the lives of nine women. Deeply felt but never melodramatic, García's films right the balance in cineplexes woefully underpopulated with thoughtfully drawn female characters. —MELISSA ANDERSON

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Items pictured but not listed are from private collections.

10 OPENINGS
Tory Burch Simone cardigan in grape, $225, and Hexagonal cuff, $175; *toryburch.com*. J Brand jeans, $196; *saksfifthavenue.com*.

54 WHOLE BEAUTY
Falke underwire sport bra, $50; *sportperfect.com*. KD Dance crop top in pale aqua, $24; *kddance.com*. Lululemon Wunder Under Crop Capri in dark gray, $68; *lululemon.com*.

72 REFLECT
Eileen Fisher scoop-neck top in light blue, $168; *eileenfisher.com*.

84 CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN
Nanette is wearing a Banana Republic cashmere-and-wool hoodie in Irish green, $90, Weekend cargo pants in rustic khaki, $70; *bananarepublic.gap.com*. BP stretch camisole in limeade, $12; *shop.nordstrom.com*. Scarpa Zen Lady sneakers, $124; *zappos.com*. Dan is wearing a Banana Republic cotton long-sleeve crewneck, $40; *bananarepublic.gap.com*. The North Face Paramount cargo shorts in asphalt gray, $45; *rei.com*. The North Face Hedgehog GTX XCR shoes, $105; *zappos.com*. Hunter is wearing Tommy Hilfiger Kids shorts in brown, $20; *macys.com*. Three-button cotton sweater in green; *gap.com*. H&M long-sleeve striped shirt in orange, $10; *hm.com* for stores. Keen Kids Targhee shoes, $60; *zappos.com*. Bison Designs two-tone carabiner, $5; *rei.com*. Odin is wearing Gap Kids button-detail cargo shorts in khaki, $27, and a striped waffle-knit T-shirt in heather gray, $17; *gap.com*. The North Face Kids Enrapture Mid WP shoes, $45; *zappos.com*.

96 HEALTHY SALADS
Mepra Fantasia Flatware fork in turtledove, $57 for five-piece set; Gracious Home, 212-231-7800.

104 IT'S ALL IN THE HORMONES
Calida Silhouette panty, $23; *takashimaya-ny.com*.

CORRECTION "Make the Right Call" (March, p. 28) incorrectly identified the Samsung Reclaim and the Nokia E72. The photos were swapped.

photograph by John Dolan, grooming by Dale Johnson, wardrobe by Zoe Glassner

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PEACEABLE KINGDOM

How to manage your home menagerie.

BY DIXIE LAITE

MARK TWAIN wrote, "She was not quite what you would call refined. She was not quite what you would call unrefined. She was the kind of person that keeps a parrot." I'm the kind of person who keeps four parrots, two dogs, and the occasional sugar glider. (Don't ask.) If you're thinking about a zoo of your own, here are some things to consider:

DO THE MATH "My first tip is to make sure you have the time and money," says trainer Annie Angell, co-owner of Brooklyn's My Two Dogs. The typical dog owner spent $225 at the vet last year, a cat owner $203, according to The American Pet Products Manufacturers Association. (And then there's the cost of food, litter, and cute outfits). Health insurance can help; check out aspcapetinsurance.com.

LEAD YOUR PACK Dogs need one-on-one training, says Tamar Geller, author of *The Loved Dog: The Playful, Nonaggressive Way to Teach Your Dog Good Behavior*. "A lone dog has no one to reinforce his wolf instincts, so he adapts more easily to human-like behavior," she says. "But with two or more dogs, it becomes *The Call of the Wild*." Angell agrees: "Bad habits can be passed from one dog to another. Train them individually, then together—or they'll 'train' themselves."

MAKE THE RIGHT MATCH One key to happily coexisting cats and dogs, says Dr. Nicholas Dodman, head of the Animal Behavior Department at Tufts University's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, is getting the right kind of canine: One with a high prey drive (such as a bird dog) may not be able to overcome his natural instincts, he says. To start off on the right paw, introduce your dog and cat gradually, Dodman suggests. Put the dog on a lead, the cat in a lap or a crate, then reward both with scratches and treats. "They'll look forward to seeing each other," he says, "because when they do, good things happen."

START EARLY—AND WATCH CLOSELY "Even cats and mice can be socialized if you start early enough," Dodman says. For kittens, the critical time for learning is the first two to seven weeks.

Supervision is key, of course, especially with birds in the mix, says Barbara Heidenreich of Good Bird Inc. A Sylvester-vs.-Tweety brawl can be deadly in more ways than the obvious. "Cat saliva contains bacteria that can be toxic to your bird," Heidenreich warns. As far as dogs living with birds, it's worth reiterating that hunting breeds may not be the safest choice, and it's key that you teach Rover the "Leave it!" command. (See last month's column for tips.)

If your animals aren't bonding right away, give them time. Dodman says, "My cat Griswold used to bristle like a Halloween cat at my friendly dog, Rusty. But now they sleep like inverted commas." +

illustration by Francesco Bongiorni

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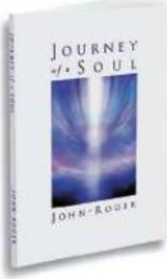

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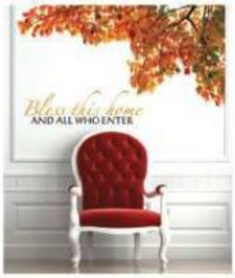

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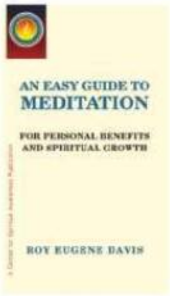

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"I have 5 discs in my back and neck from an accident. The medicine prescribed by my doctor can only stop the half of the pain. I tried **PainEase** and it helps 99% of the pain. On a scale of 1 to 10, I would rate this product a 10." - Ray Barron, Indiana

***These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. As everyone is different, customers should not expect the same results. The above products are used as dieatary supplement support.*

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Avoid Gum Surgery

New Technique Fights Harmful Gum Disease

by Vas Gardiakos

IF you have periodontitis, now available is a natural home-care breakthrough to improve your gum health and save your teeth.

Briefly, bacteria (plaque) force the gum to detach from the teeth, forming a pocket. Brushing, flossing and irrigating cannot reach the bacteria in the pocket. The pocket deepens and erodes more of the bone that supports the teeth. The gum recedes, teeth loosen and fall out. You health suffers.

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The VitaPick™ is a high quality pen-size applicator that delivers natural antiseptics such as salt solution and peroxide into the pocket. The VitaPick™ works because it applies these powerful antiseptics that kill the destructive bacteria at base of even the deepest pocket.

Kill the harmful bacteria, the disease process stops and the healing begins.

My 160 page easy reading book *The Smile Method - How To Avoid Gum Surgery and Dentures* covers all aspects of the natural home treatment for periodontitis. It lists all the problems associated with gum surgery and root planing. It will show you how to use the VitaPick™ to quickly kill the deep hard to reach bacteria. More important, you will be shown a few simple ways to verify that it is effective.

The VitaPick™ and book are only $33.95 plus $6 s&h. To order, call 1-800-533-1821 (VISA, MC) or mail payment to: Albrite Inc., Box 1625, Dept. BAS-9, T.S., FL 34688.

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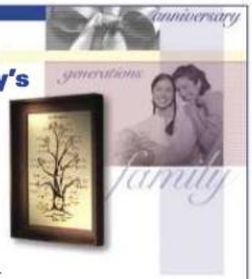

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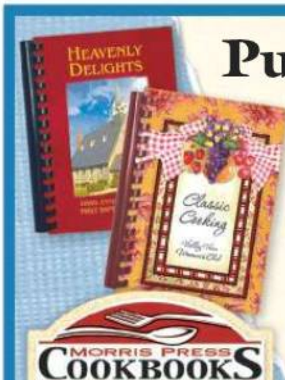

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The environmentalist and her mother, activist Frances Moore Lappé, cofounded the Small Planet Institute, devoted to revealing the root causes of hunger. Anna's latest book is *Diet for a Hot Planet: The Climate Crisis at the End of Your Fork and What You Can Do About It* (Bloomsbury).

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IF I COULD SAY ONE THING TO MYSELF 10 YEARS AGO ... "You'll never believe it, but there's an organic garden on the White House lawn!"

MY FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WORLD ... The dimples on my 8-month-old daughter's cheeks when she smiles.

THE MOVIE I WATCH WHEN I WANT TO LAUGH ... *The Yes Men*! [A prankster documentary in which anticorporate activists Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno pose as WTO spokespeople.]

NO ONE KNOWS I ... Read *The Financial Times*.

I FEEL HEALTHY WHEN I ... Practice what I preach.

IF I COULD DO ANYTHING ELSE FOR A LIVING, I'D ... Be a public-interest lawyer and work with communities impacted by pesticide and chemical exposure. That is, if I could skip the law-school part of the equation.

EXERCISE ROUTINE ... Think about exercising, put on yoga clothes, change daughter's diaper, put her down for a nap, clean kitchen, prepare daughter's baby food, answer phone, respond to e-mails, check Twitter, get inspired at 101cookbooks.com, make shopping list, remember that I meant to exercise.

PROUDEST MOMENT IN MY CAREER ... Dedicating *Diet for a Hot Planet* to my mother and daughter.

MY DAD ALWAYS TOLD ME ... Follow the precautionary principle: Look before you leap.

MY MOM WAS RIGHT ABOUT ... The myth of scarcity: There is enough food to feed the world.

THE LESSON I KEEP LEARNING OVER AND OVER ... It's always worth it to take a stand for something you believe in.

I WISH I HAD MORE TIME FOR ... Rabble-rousing.

MY GREAT UNFULFILLED DREAM IS ... Singing in a rock band.

REAL CONTENTMENT IS ... Going to bed after a well-spent day.

ONE OF MY FAVORITE QUOTATIONS IS ... "Most of the things worth doing in the world had been declared impossible before they were done." [by Louis D. Brandeis, "the people's lawyer"]

I ALWAYS FEEL SANER WHEN I ... Make a home-cooked meal.

photograph by Andrea Wyner

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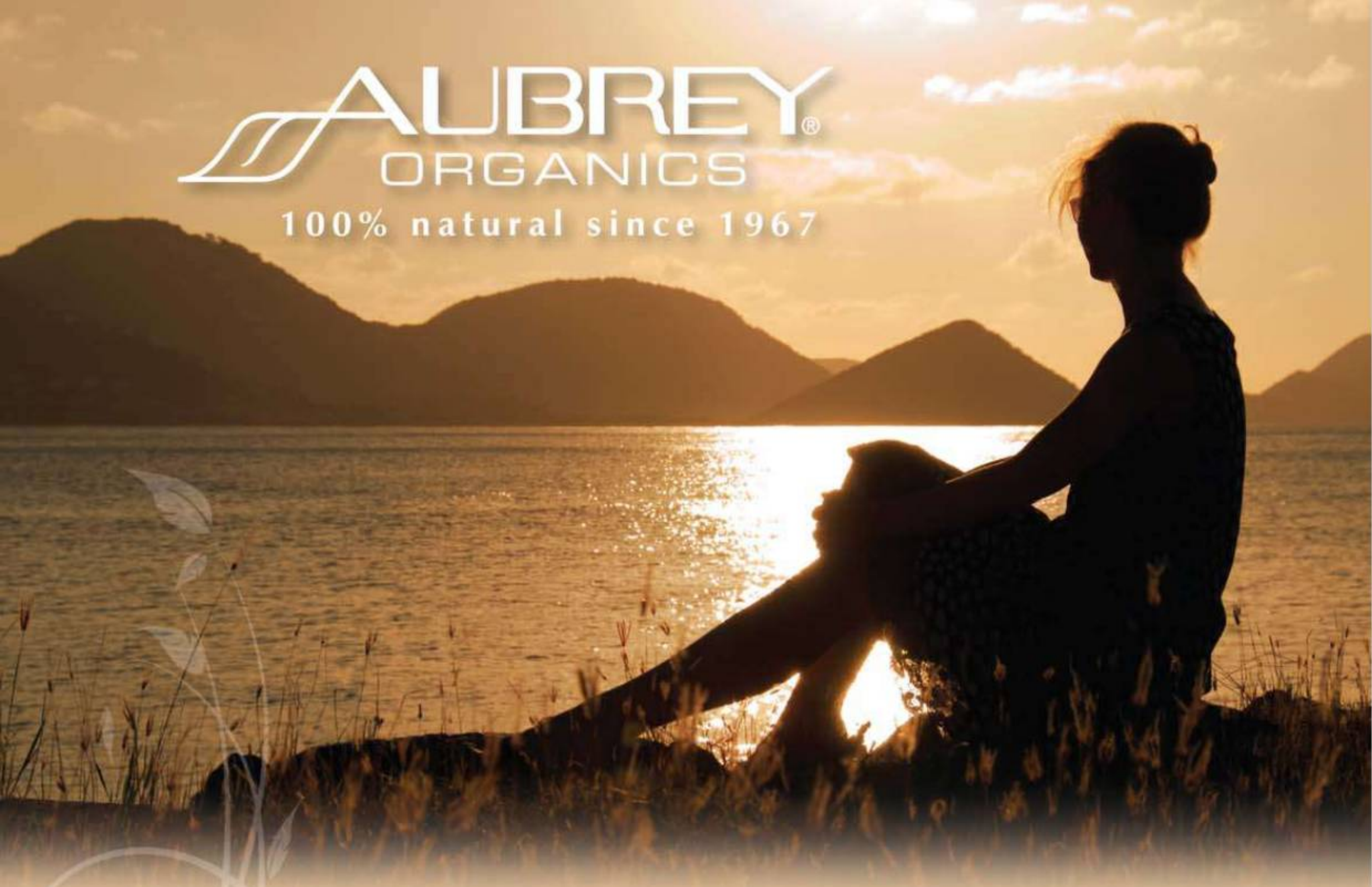

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